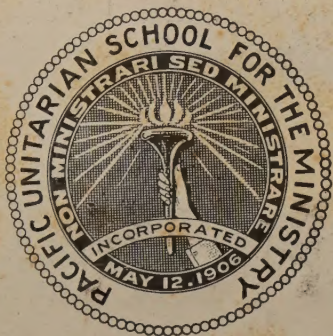


THE HELPER





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THE GIFT OF

BRITISH AND FOREIGN
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From the Editor

Kansas 1900



(Photo, by Tom Reveley, Wantage.)

KING ALFRED THE GREAT.

Born 849. Died 901.

THE HELPER

A Handbook for Sunday School Teachers
and Parents

1901

EDITED BY

REV. W. G. TARRANT, B.A.

'And he took a little child, and set him in the midst of them; and taking him in his arms, he said unto them: "Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me but HIM that sent me."—*Mark* ix. 36, 37.

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THE LABOURERS' HYMN.

*'Go work in My vineyard, My garden and field,
'And bring Me the fruits and the flowers they yield.'
—The voice of the Master the labourers heard,
And into His harvest they went at His word.*

*The fathers beloved, the reapers of yore,
Have brought home their sheaves, and their labour is o'er ;
But lo ! as He calleth the weary to sleep,
New harvests arise and new harvesters reap.*

*The old world rejoiceth again in her youth,
And yieldeth her increase of beauty and truth ;
While over the meadows, in sunshine or rain,
The hymn of the labourers riseth again :—*

*'Oh not to man's glory the chorus we raise,
'But unto our God be thanksgiving and praise,
'For lives growing fruitful, wherever they stand,
'And souls that like blossoms make lovely the land.*

*'O Teacher of teachers and Helper of all,
'Thou knowest our need, and Thou hearest our call,—
'Give strength to Thy servants their task to fulfil,
And send forth, we pray Thee, more labourers still.'*

W. G. T.



Sunday School Teachers whom I have known.

BY THE REV. R. A. ARMSTRONG, B.A.

THIS volume, like its predecessors, will doubtless urge upon its reader intelligent, systematic, well-digested teaching in the Sunday School. It will provide the teacher with excellent material for informing the scholar of the true nature of the Bible and the facts of early Christian history. It will offer bright and suggestive lessons on various natural objects. It will insist well and wisely on the careful preparation of lessons, and on the most modern methods of teaching.

All this is very good, and the teacher who has such a 'Helper' at hand is at an enormous advantage over his predecessor of a generation or two ago. Yet, invited as I am, to write a foreword to this present volume, I find myself recalling some teachers I have known, who were by no means up to anything of this kind, but, nevertheless, wrought well among the children. And recalling others, who were, indeed, quite capable of using such a book as this, I am impressed by the fact that

it was their personality and character that told rather than their particular instructions.

I wonder whether I can call up the images of any of these old friends of mine, in such a way as to give you any feeling of their personality and of the springs of their influence.

My earliest ministry was in a little linen town in County Down, with small farms all around it; and my congregation were mostly very humble folk. We had our Sunday School; but the idea of these improved methods of teaching was quite beyond us. It was mostly Bible, and Bible read, I must confess, with no very luminous intelligence. Yet, that Sunday School was doing no little good. How well I remember the superintendent, James Arlowe—a small and very poor farmer, uncouth of speech, unlettered, redolent of that Irish soil; perhaps thirty-five or forty years of age. What a labour was it to him to make up the annual returns for the Central Society, having its offices in Belfast! 'Are you sure,' said I to him, 'that our average is really eighty?' My impression was and is, that it was nearer half the number. 'Well, sir,' said he, 'we often have eighty on a fine Sunday afternoon.' So the statis-

tics were compiled, and so was history made. But James loved and was beloved. The lads and lasses were of his own class and his own type. And as he and they spelt out the columns of Habakkuk or Romans together, they perhaps got no very clear notion what either the prophet or the apostle meant, but the scholars had the feeling that they were with a good and tender man, and there was a benediction from him that went with them into their daily lives.

And my time at the High Pavement Chapel, Nottingham,—what memories I have of the array of single-hearted teachers in that great Sunday-school, which, with its companion Day-school, did so much for the building up in intelligence and character of the Nottingham that is now! But I can only mention two or three of them.

There was William Gill, the silver-haired old gentleman, so simple, so devout, so pained at the introduction of 'criticism,' either into pulpit sermons or Sunday school teaching. He would have had us all just to try to be like Jesus, and be content with that. At every Sunday-school discussion—how many we did have!—no matter what the nominal subject, we all knew when he got up to speak that he would tell us how the school should be the nursery of the church, and how we did not want scholarly teaching, but simple religion.

Dear Mr. Gill! He was never satisfied with us. He was always depressing us a little by the way he shook his

kind head over our doings and sayings. But how faithful he was, how simple, how loving, how religious! How the Christ-light used to shine from his countenance! I fear he took very, very little advantage of the admirable help the Sunday School Association even then provided for our teachers. It never got hold of him. But his memory to-day is a holy influence deep down in the hearts of many a colleague and scholars scattered over the world.

Yes! they crowd upon my memory, those Nottingham teachers. But I must sketch only two others of them on these pages. With what a fulness of love and reverence does one turn to the thought of Mrs. Turner, the cousin of no less a man than Dr. Martineau. Catharine Rankin was married in 1819 to the young minister of the High Pavement Chapel. In 1822, he died. And from 1822 to 1894, Catharine Turner lived a widow in or near the town where he had ministered, carrying on the spirit of his ministry through three long generations. She, indeed, is no illustration of the fact, that good work may be done in the Sunday school without much book learning. A woman of the noblest culture, she retained to the last her intellectual keenness, her intense interest in the progress of the world, her wise, helpful, loving sympathy with the young in their hopes, their enterprises, their difficulties, their trials. Children and grand-children of her old scholars swarmed into the school, and she was

still there at the superintendent's desk, beautiful in her aged dignity, firm, authoritative, yet most benign; honoured, venerated by teacher and by scholar. I think she was still superintendent when eighty years of age. Her literary culture was a great help to her, and a great boon to those with whom she had to do. But it was the moral and spiritual character, her personality, her womanhood, that told with such large and enduring effect on hundreds of girls and women of every rank and every degree of education.

And William Enfield, grandson of the famous Dr. Enfield, of 'Enfield's Speaker,' and successor of his father in the town-clerkship of Nottingham: when I knew him he was already an old man, past active Sunday-school labour. But what memories there were of him and his wife, and of the allotment gardens they provided for the elder scholars, and how some very early rising scholar one sunny summer's morning caught Mrs. Enfield on the top of a ladder painting a motto over the greenhouse door! Even in my time he held open house for us all in his capacious dining-room, and we always held our teachers' meetings there. I could point to men in places of highest influence and honour who owe all they are to William Enfield and the Sunday school. As an old man he was the very ideal of the word 'patriarch.' When you looked on him, that was the epithet that sprang to your mind—the broad and venerable brow, the long grey beard, the good-

ness and kindness in the face, the quiet deeds of thoughtful generosity done as though they were a simple debt which it would be a scandal not to discharge. I know nothing about the particular instruction he gave his class; I am sure there was no touch of Kuenen or of Baur; labours such as theirs seemed almost to hurt him. Almost the tenderest reminiscence I have of him is how he stood by me when I, from the pulpit, said things about the Bible or Jesus Christ which were repugnant to all the views he had cherished through a long and saintly life. The solid impression of his character on the school, on the church, and on the town was one of the richest heritages any man ever left behind him.

About the Sunday-school teachers I have known since then I must needs be very reticent. Indeed, I only dare faintly to indicate one, still happily with us in her quiet retirement, who for forty years was the faithful helper of the school with which I am now associated. To get to school she had first to walk some two or three miles on the other side of the river, then to cross by the ferry in whatever wet or wild weather it might be; then a very long mile up-hill to the church and the school-house. Yet she was never known to be late. It was currently said that you might set your watch by the moment she appeared at the corner of the street. She expected from others the same punctuality and discipline which she imposed upon herself,

and enforced through all the long decades of her service the maxim that example is better than precept.

And all these reminiscences I have called up, not to depreciate that intelligent and well-informed teaching which our Sunday School Association has so wonderfully promoted in our midst by its splendid publications, but to remind us that personality and character count for most of all. That very personality and character will, indeed, lead the true teacher to equip himself to the very best he can, and to carry to the class a mind as well-stored as time, talent, and education may permit. But there will always be some teachers who can make little headway even with the best manuals of Bible or Church history. I want superintendents to feel that these also may have their functions; and, above all, I want them to feel themselves that, if they are faithfully doing their best with love in their hearts, it is well, and the Great Superintendent who reads all hearts will have His 'Well done!' for them at the last.

The greatest and best of all the lessons we can teach our scholars is this: That duty is sacred and solemn, that love is the great and divinely ordered help, and that the Father is always there ready to guide and to guard. And this lesson is taught not so much by the study of books—though even in this also that may greatly help—as by touch with one who is living in full consciousness and realisation of these everlasting truths.

Alfred the Great.



THOUSAND years will have passed on October 26th, 1901, since the death of Alfred the Great. Let us turn back over this long space of time and picture Wessex, the country of the West Saxons, at the date of his birth 849 A.D., when his father, Ethelwulf, was on the throne, receiving from the other kings in our island the titles of 'Over-lord' and 'King of the English.' Forests spread then over a great part of Wessex. Through them, and over hills and dales, ran tracks leading to villages and towns, which lay, here and there, in the midst of orchards, meadows, and common land, and were connected together—a kind of network of communities—by these devious paths. In the north of Wessex lay the chalk hills, which travellers in Berkshire know so well, with the slopes of Ashdown stretching along them, and, at their foot, the town of Wantage, the birthplace of the Royal boy Alfred.

The King of Wessex was accustomed to move his court from place to place, so the young princes, his sons, became well known to the West Saxons; but Alfred, who was the youngest—a brave, bright boy—was specially loved by his father's subjects, and received from them the name of 'England's darling.'

Who does not know the old story which tells how the little lad won from

his mother the illuminated manuscript of Saxon poems which she had promised to the prince who should be the first to learn them by heart? Whether the tale be true or not, the old Chroniclers tell us that the boy Alfred dearly loved the battle songs and ballads that formed the national literature of the time.

Another story records that this little prince out of Wessex twice crossed Europe with a great escort to visit his godfather Pope Leo IV. in Rome, and was anointed by him, on the second occasion, as future King of the West Saxons.

With the Papal blessing resting upon him, Alfred returned to the land over which he was one day to reign. He learned in his youth, as all young nobles did, to wrestle, leap, and bear arms, and became famous as a huntsman throughout Wessex. He was descended from a race of heroes, and it behoved him also to be brave, for had not the fierce sea-kings from the Baltic invaded one English kingdom after another till only the land of the West Saxons remained independent?

But Alfred would be more than a warrior. He studied diligently the Saxon manuscripts copied by the monks, and in his bosom he carried a little hand-book, his daily companion, in which were jotted down in his own hand here a prayer, and there a thought from St. Augustine, with passages from the Psalms and rules for his own conduct. Early in

the mornings he used 'to repair to some church or holy place and there cast himself before God in prayer that he might do nothing contrary to His holy will.'

We learn something else about Alfred's character from the ancient Chronicles. They tell us how, more than once, his brothers claimed a part of his share of certain domains and treasures left among them by their father's will. Rather than strive for his rights, he gave up lands and goods that the Royal house might not set to the people of Wessex the evil example of quarrelling.

Suddenly, when Ethelwulf's fourth son was on the throne, a storm broke over Wessex. Troops of Danes sailed up the Thames and the rivers on the Southern coast, and scoured the country on the wild horses that abounded there, leaving ruin in their track. We must picture Alfred, now Crown Prince, rousing his countrymen to arms and leading them to battle. In 871, on the death of Ethelred, in the midst of this incursion, he was called to be king. We need not wonder that the crown seemed no welcome prize to him, and we are told that in his youthful zeal to stem the disorders into which his people fell, his rule was so severe that he turned from him the hearts of numbers of his subjects.

Summer after summer hosts of those Northern pirates invaded Wessex. It mattered not that sometimes the West Saxons were victorious; new bands

poured in. At last one winter, when snow lay on the ground and no fighting could be done, a great horde of Danes, led by their famous king Guthrum, broke into Wessex. Then the people lost courage. The nobles fled to hide themselves as best they could in the bleak hills and in the fens; and the young king, with his wife and sister and a band of faithful followers, took refuge among the marshes of Somersetshire.

Think of the ruin of the land! The Christian religion had almost died out before the pagan hosts. Monasteries with their treasures had been destroyed; monks and priests had fled; homesteads were ruined, fair meadows turned into fields of slaughter. The people were utterly demoralized by the long wars. It is not in those dark years, in the early part of his reign, that we must look for the records we want of the noble King who became 'the strength of England.'

But see! the sunshine is breaking through the storm cloud. A thousand years ago, as now, the power of personal character was the greatest power in the world. 'As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.' King Alfred's 'strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure.' In his camp among the marshes inspiring dreams and visions came to him. Hope and courage returned. His thoughts were all for the sorrows of his people; he had no ambitious projects for himself. He sends forth

trusty messengers to seek his scattered thanes and summon them to meet him on an appointed day in Selwood Forest.

Wonderful is the story which tells how the news spread; how beacon fires, hidden from the Danish host by the Wiltshire hills, were lighted; how the people flocked round Alfred's standard; how, after a fierce battle, Guthrum and his army were forced to surrender and humbly sue for mercy.

Now, bear in mind that the enemies who had laid waste his kingdom for years were in the King's power. Remember, too, that he was descended from a race of warriors, and the fighting instinct of the old Saxons was strong within him. He had now a chance to advance on his victory and make himself ruler of all England. Yet he put aside all dreams of conquest; and, on condition that Guthrum and the best of his chiefs were baptized into the Christian religion and the Danish army was withdrawn from Wessex, he signed the peace of Wedmore with his enemies, giving up to them (roughly speaking) the north-eastern half of England and retaining for himself only the small kingdom of his forefathers. 'Let the past be forgotten,' said Alfred, 'Let Dane and Saxon settle down side by side in the land in peace and become in time one nation'; and so long as Guthrum lived Alfred had no further trouble with the Danes.

Now followed about fourteen years of peace. To ensure the safety of

Wessex the King restored the ruined towns, among them London, which he protected with a wall and tower. He built a navy, and made plans for the defence of the land. But he did nobler work than this. The Chroniclers tell us how, first of all, his aim was to make his people good and wise. Out of the neglected laws and customs of earlier days, with the consent of the Witan or National Council, he drew up a new code of laws easy to be understood by the ignorant, and among its commandments were the words, 'That ye will that other men do not to you, ye do not that to other men.' He established schools in his palace for the young nobles, whom he loved like his own sons, and he provided schoolmasters for the children of the peasants that everyone might learn to read in his own mother tongue.

The monk Asser, his friend, who wrote a history of his reign, says that Alfred thirsted for knowledge, and 'threw himself with all his mind into the seeking out of things unknown, spending many hours both day and night in study.' At his invitation, learned men from foreign lands came to help him in the translation of Latin books for the use of his people. Thus he laid the foundation of our noble English literature; there was no prose known to the English people before his time. For the help of his dear West Saxons he wrote out his favourite extracts, often adding his own words to make their meaning clear or to

teach some beautiful lesson. Nor did he forget the children; for he prepared simple books specially for their use. Scribes must have been busy in those days making copies, by hand, of book after book which the King and his helpers brought out, and we can guess how precious those copies must have been to the people.

Who has not heard of King Alfred's candles by which he marked off the passing of the hours in the nights and in the sunless days, so that he might be sure that he portioned out his life rightly? It was by method and order that he found time for prayer and meditation, for study and authorship; for his happy home life and friendships, and his duties as king.

Through most of his life Alfred was subject to attacks of violent pain, yet he worked on bravely, and the Chronicles tell us how he built up his nation, making his small kingdom, which had been crushed by the Danes, the type of what he thought a State should be. 'Kindly of speech was he beyond compare,' and craftsmen from abroad settled down gladly under his rule to impart their skill to the men of Wessex. In all these occupations the King used to join, moving his court from place to place and making himself one with his people in all their interests. We are told that 'whatever line of life any one of his subjects might take up, it was to Alfred that he looked as the supreme example of success in that line.' He restored the monasteries, which became centres of

culture in the land, and founded little seats of learning at Ely and (as some say) at Oxford. 'England's darling,' 'England's shepherd,' 'Alfred the truth-teller,' were names by which he was known; and to his councillors and nobles, as well as to the humblest in the land, he was example and hero.

In the twelfth or thirteenth century a book was prepared called 'The Proverbs of Alfred.' There are two manuscript copies still treasured in libraries in Oxford and Cambridge. It is believed that these Proverbs were wise sayings by King Alfred which his people loved to quote, and which were handed down from father to son and thus preserved in the hearts of his subjects. Here are a few of them: 'Power is never a good unless he be good that hath it.' 'No wise man should desire a soft life.' 'You need not be desirous for power nor strive after it; if you be wise and good it will follow you though you should not wish it.' 'As a man soweth, so also he moweth, and every man's doom to his own door doth come.'

The great heart of Alfred went out beyond the narrow boundaries of the little kingdom he loved so much. He sent embassies to distant lands and formed close bonds with foreign nations; for, as he hoped that Dane, Angle, and Saxon would grow in time into one English race, so he looked on into the future, and saw England bound in ties of peace and progress with the people of the great European world.

The old Chroniclers tell us about Alfred's life and character, but they say nothing about his outward form and appearance. A present day writer (Sir Walter Besant) makes a guess about this matter. He says:—'You may ask what manner of man to look at was this great King. . . . I take him to have been a man of good stature and of strong build—a man whose appearance was kingly, who impressed his followers with the gallant and confident carriage of a brave soldier. But as to his face or the colour of his hair or eyes, I can tell you nothing. Fair hair he had, I think, and blue eyes, or the more common type of brown hair and grey eyes. When a king resigns all personal ambitions and seeks nothing for himself, it seems natural and fitting that, while his works live after him, he himself should vanish without leaving so much as a tradition of his face or figure?'

There is now only space to tell very briefly how in 893, Guthrum being dead, a fresh host of Danes crossed the sea, and a long war broke out again in Wessex. Soresly was the King pressed, but his faithful subjects rallied round him; and we are told that in those dark times his unruffled calmness and patience had a mighty influence on all about him. He often cheered himself by repeating this verse, written by his favourite poet, Boethius—a verse which he had caused to be translated from Latin into Saxon for his people:—

' Though ruin on ruin
 Be heaped through the world,
 Though on the wild wind
 The billows be hurled,
 Thou, 'stablished in quiet,
 Thou, happy and strong,
 Mayst smile at the tempest
 Through all thy life long.'

Three years after peace had been restored, at the age of 51, his attacks of pain increasing, the King knew that his end was near. His sorrowing children, who deeply loved and greatly honoured their Royal father, gathered round him, and in the following words he gave his farewell counsel to his son Edward, who was to succeed him:—'I pray thee, my dear child, be a father to thy people. Be the children's father and the widow's friend. Comfort the poor, protect and shelter the weak, and, with all thy might, right that which is wrong. And, my son, govern thyself by law. Then shall the Lord love thee, and God Himself shall be thy reward. Call upon Him to advise thee in all thy need, and He shall help thee to compass all thy desires.'

'And thus,' to quote the Chronicle known as 'The Book of Hyde,' 'all things being set in order, the most Christian King Alfred, the strength of his people, yielded unto death. Illustrious was he, and the dread of all his foes, for on his doings shone the light of God.'

Let his own words end this little sketch:—'I have sought to live worthily, the while I lived, and after my life to leave to the men who

come after me a remembering of me in good works.'

Well may we keep the memory green of our great King who lived a thousand years ago!

FRANCES E. COOKE.

MY 'LITTLE KINGDOM.'

Do you know Louisa Alcott's hymn, beginning

A little kingdom I possess,

Where thoughts and feelings dwell?

It is to be found in several of our school hymn books, and ought to be in all. Louisa wrote it when a child, and it is just the thing for our little 'Alfreds and Alfredas' to learn after hearing about Alfred the Great.

And here is another 'song' from the same clever writer—she was fifteen when she wrote it, and it shows the spirit in which she ruled her 'kingdom,' and made the humblest tasks right royal.

Queen of my tub I merrily sing,

While the white foam rises high,

And sturdily wash, and rinse, and wring,

And fasten the clothes to dry;

Then out in the free, fresh air they swing,

Under the sunny sky.

I wish we could wash from our hearts and our souls

The stains of the week away,

And let water and air by their magic make

Ourselves as pure as they;

Then on the earth there would be, indeed,

A glorious washing-day!

Along the path of a useful life

Will heart's-ease ever bloom;

The busy mind has no time to think

Of sorrow, or care, or gloom;

And anxious thoughts may be swept away

As we busily wield a broom,

From Josiah to Jesus.

INTRODUCTORY.



AN children be led to think intelligently about history, and especially about religious history? Or must the teacher fall back, in something like despair, upon the plan of giving disconnected stories, taken from the Bible, or elsewhere, more or less at random, in the hope of temporarily 'interesting' his pupils while trying to implant religious ideas? That is one of the problems which the present series of lessons is intended to bring to the test.

The Bible, which is the chief means of religious instruction amongst us, may be used either way. It is rich in sayings and incidents which may be taken separately and, even so, not unprofitably. But it is also a result of growing thought and connected experiences; it is a record of life, not of individuals alone, but of a people; it is in a very true way a 'revelation.' No doubt it is a record which cannot be mastered without some patient thinking; but surely the mind that has perceived the connection between its parts and has traced its growth from one generation to another, has done more, and has itself developed more fully, than one that has been kept to the contemplation of mere fragments of the story.

We are to deal with Bible history; but it may be asked: Can children at school age understand what we mean by the history even of their own

country? That some can and do is evident from the lively interest they show in the sight of anything that vividly illustrates the past—ruined castles, minsters, armour, cromlechs, stone implements, and other relics. But any one who has tested an average class of children in attendance at an elementary school knows but too well that, as a rule, the child's notions as to the lapse of long periods of time are extremely hazy. It has not enough historic material stored in its memory to enable it to fill in between the 'dates' even if these have been learnt; and not infrequently the most important 'dates' are hopelessly mixed up in the scholar's mind, or are largely matters for more or less lucky guess-work.

If this is so with regard to the history of our own country, we may think how little likely the teacher is to succeed who tries to take his class back across the great intervals of time and circumstance that separate the people of the Bible from ourselves, and to deal with a portion of the history there recorded. And yet there is absolutely no period of religious history more momentous than this; and if one does not succeed in some substantial degree in making it real to them, the children who come to him for help will go away in a year or two to swell the ranks of those who continue all their lives in the dark as to the great past, whose imaginations are cheated by meagre and erroneous conceptions, and whose thoughts upon the meaning of Christ-

ianity cannot but be confused in the extreme. Let us aim at an intelligent faith for ourselves and for our children.

In order to render profitable this series of lessons, it is indispensable that the *whole* should be carefully studied by the teacher in advance. The aid of the map and the chronological table must be diligently sought, alone and with the class. Maps and tables are both to be procured readily in most towns; the Essex Hall book-room will supply them by post on short notice. Whether a printed chronological table is obtained or not, the teacher is strongly recommended to draw up one of his own, however rudely. The lessons here given will supply him with data, and he can always omit or emphasise where it seems desirable to do so. The effort to show the progress of six or seven centuries in *scale*, although the results may be very imperfect, is always very illuminating. It gives an opportunity also of interesting the scholars' minds in something not simply printed, but *made* for their benefit. Of course, any suitable scale may be taken—three inches, six, or twelve to a century—just what comes handiest. Probably, a *horizontal* plan will serve better than a perpendicular one; the eye travels better to and fro over the horizontal level, and more readily seizes on the points of prominence. The names of persons or events being inserted at the proper places, strong under-lines of different colour may conveniently

suggest the chief divisions of the history—the Captivity, Persian overlordship, Syrian, and so on. Probably it will be found convenient to limit the use of the chart to special sections as a rule; but occasion should be taken to show them all in proper position now and then in order to keep up a sense of proportion. The questions at the end of the lessons will probably suggest other details of method, and the teacher of an inventive mind will easily discover the line of action best suited to the case of his own class, whether indicated here or not.

It will be seen that the 'Readings' suggested include some selected from the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament. The teacher can without difficulty get a copy of the Apocrypha—the Revised Version is by far to be preferred—and may utilise it for other selections. The children ought to understand early that the canonical Scriptures form part of a wider literature, and they should be prepared to judge all Scripture according to its effect for good on their minds.

It is not easy to name any one manual that will just cover the period here dealt with, but the painstaking teacher will find 'The Bible for Young People' a mine of wealth in this as in other connections. Prof. Carpenter supplies most useful knowledge about the land and the people in his 'Life in Palestine.' The S.S.A. manuals on 'The Prophecies of the Captivity' (Herford) and 'The Story of Jeremiah and his Times' (Johnson) also supply

valuable material. Especially for the earlier lessons, the teacher is strongly recommended to read carefully through these little volumes before beginning these lessons with his class. Reference to larger works is unnecessary, as anyone who has them at command is hardly likely to be dependent in any degree on the following sketches.

The *Questions*, it is hoped, will help the teacher to focus his instruction upon definite points.

I.—The Hebrews and their Land.

READING. *Psalm lxxxi.*

Who were these people who sang such a hymn as this, and whose hymns are still sung all over the civilized world in Christian churches? They were the people who lived in the land where after a history of many hundreds of years the first Christian church was begun, and where Jesus Christ, himself one of this people, was born nineteen hundred years ago. We call this people 'the Jews.' In the psalm we have just read we find them referring to their own race as that of 'Israel,' or 'Jacob,' or 'Joseph.' These were names given to the great ancestors which their traditions told of—traditions which we find in the Book of Genesis. But the name usually given to the people then was 'the Hebrews.' They were not very numerous compared with modern nations. Their land was a tiny one, about the size of Wales. But small things often prove really 'greater' in worth than large. The

Hebrews have exerted a vast influence upon the life of mankind by the *thoughts* which have come through them into the minds of all who read THE BIBLE. They are the people who gave the world this book.

Christians treasure the Bible chiefly because it contains the story of Jesus Christ's life, and a record of his teachings. For many generations, since long before any of our oldest castles or churches were built, that story and those teachings have been held precious, as they will always be. *Our* land was inhabited by barbarous tribes when Jesus lived and died in Palestine. Since then how many changes have taken place here! Our land has been invaded by one host of strangers after another. They have settled here, and cities have been built, and forests have been cleared, and roads made, and order and civilization have taken the place of barbarism. It has been a long process, but if slow it has been sure. We hope our land and people will make even better progress in the future than in the past, and with God's help we too may help to bring this about, and so be true disciples of him who 'went about doing good.'

But we must prepare our minds for even a farther look back than to the time when Jesus lived. For, as has been said, he was one of a people who had already a long history behind them when he lived amongst them. And if we wish really to understand what the New Testament says about him, and

what he says himself, we must learn something of that history, otherwise we shall be very much like people who go to a foreign country without knowing the speech or customs of the inhabitants. Besides, all history is like a tree, and just as the branch springs from the trunk so one thing comes from another. The Christian religion sprang from the Jewish stock, and Jesus himself learned from the prophets and teachers who had lived in the old times before him. Let us, then, in our turn, look back beyond the times of Jesus—far off as they are—and see something of those old times which proved so fruitful in giving us the Old Testament, and preparing the way for what Christians call ‘the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.’

You will ask,—‘How far back, then, are we to go?’ And if you are told ‘*to the times of King Josiah of Judah*,’ you will naturally want to know why we choose his times more than those of King David, or King Solomon, or some other Hebrew King of whom you have heard. Well, this is the answer—an answer which you will better understand when our lessons are all done, and you have a clearer and fuller knowledge of Hebrew history ‘From Josiah to Jesus’ :—This part of Hebrew history is richest in the growth of those thoughts that have made the Hebrew Bible such a powerful religious teacher of mankind. We shall see what those thoughts are as we go along.

Meanwhile, let us look at this CHART.¹ You will see it is divided into seven sections. Each section stands for one century—a hundred years. Never mind about the names and other marks on the chart just now, but try to think what ‘seven centuries of history’ means. You who know something of English history can think of King John who signed the Magna Charta nearly seven hundred years ago in the flat meadow near Windsor. Or you can think of our present aged and beloved sovereign, Victoria, who has reigned between sixty and seventy years. Ten periods of seventy years each, one after another, would cover the time between the birth of Josiah and the death of Jesus. Many things have happened since Queen Victoria began to reign; great men have lived and worked in different ways and died leaving famous names; books have been written; wars and troubles of various kinds have occurred. By far most of the people of our land have been born since the Queen’s accession, and those who were men and women then have nearly all died. So it was in the centuries that passed between Josiah and Jesus; the generations of men lived and worked and died; many of the things that happened are quite lost to human record; long spaces of the history are blank; but some very important names and facts remain, and about these we shall try to learn, and especially about the best of them.

Let us close our first lesson by a

¹ See Introductory Chapter.

brief note or two about these people, the Hebrews, especially as to events before the time of Josiah.

The Psalm which we have read reminds us that the people often looked back to a far-distant past, when their ancestors had been slaves in Egypt (see verses 5 and 6). They had been delivered from bondage under 'Moses,' whom they looked upon as their first and greatest religious teacher. Led by him, as their traditions told, they wandered for many years in the wilderness country enclosed by the two northern arms of the Red Sea; but, at last, amid much warfare, they obtained a foothold in the far pleasanter country of Canaan, or Palestine, as we now call it. Here, during a long period, the tribes, or 'clans,' of the Hebrews gradually settled down into closer unity, and at last they appointed a king to be over them all. This was Saul, and he was succeeded by the most celebrated of all the Hebrew kings—David—about whom so many romantic tales are told in the Bible. After David came Solomon, and during his time the Hebrew nation not only enjoyed much prosperity, but claimed possession of a good deal of territory eastward of Palestine. At most, however, they never had an empire similar to those governed by the greater ancient Powers; to say nothing of the dominions ruled by modern Britain or Russia. If we look at our map, we see *Egypt* to the south-west, *Assyria* and *Babylonia* to the east, and *Persia* still further in that direction. The people

of these lands were far mightier in military strength than the Hebrews, and each in turn subdued them, though none of them could rival this wonderful people in the thoughts that they possessed and gave to mankind.

When Solomon died, the nation was divided under two kings, and so it went on — sometimes prosperously, sometimes not—for a good while; but those *Assyrians*, whom we mentioned just now, came at last in the course of their victorious campaigns to fight against this little Hebrew land. The king of the northern kingdom was utterly defeated, and a great number of the chief people were taken prisoners and marched off to Nineveh, on the Tigris, and the country thereabout. That happened in the time of Hezekiah, Josiah's great grandfather, who was king of the southern kingdom at the time, and who very nearly suffered the same fate as the northern king. And all through the years that followed, up to Josiah's time, the people of Judah, the southern kingdom, were in more or less dread of being carried off as their brethren had been. We shall see that, in the end, many of them were; their villages and towns, like those of the north, were burnt and destroyed, and their great city, Jerusalem, where the king had his palace, was laid in ruins.

These troubles had a great effect on the minds of the people then and afterwards. The Hebrews were strongly attached to religious practices, and like other nations at the time, they believed

that a special god, whom they worshipped, watched over their nation in particular. Their ideas and their worship, however, appear to have been very mixed; while their best and wisest men—the prophets—sought a purer religion, with nobler conceptions of God, and a higher morality, many—probably the large majority—were content to mingle with the people around them in gross superstitions, and to imitate the low and often degrading ceremonies which they introduced into their worship. The Books of ‘Kings,’ in the Bible, give us a good deal of information about all this; but in reading them, we have to remember that these books were finally put together a long time after the events, and that they represent the somewhat distorted picture of the past which men of a special type cherished. It will be sufficient now to remember that when Josiah came to the throne, it was amongst but a small remnant of the ancient Hebrew people; that there were many dangers threatening this small remnant; and that in the midst of their troubles men were trying to find out a better religion, and one which they hoped would insure them against further national disaster.

The next Lesson will show us some of their efforts in this direction.

Dates to fix:—

More than 1300 years before Christ.—The deliverance from Egypt, commonly called the *Exodus*.

About 1020 B.C.—The first king, *Saul*.

„ 1000 B.C.—King *David*.

About 970 B.C.—King *Solomon*.

„ 933 B.C.—The nation divided into two kingdoms, North (‘Ephraim’), and South (‘Judah’).

„ 722 B.C.—The North ruined by the *Assyrians*.

„ 640 B.C.—King *Josiah*.

[*Note*.—We are living about as long after Alfred the Great as Jesus did after David.]

Questions.

1. Who were the Hebrews? Where did they live?

2. Point out on the map: The Jordan; the Northern Kingdom, and the city of Samaria; the Southern, and Jerusalem.

3. Also show where Assyria lay, and Nineveh.

4. Name the first three kings of the Hebrews.

5. How long was it from the death of Solomon (933) to the captivity of the North, under Assyria? How long from this captivity till Josiah began to reign?

6. What effect had the national troubles on the minds of the people?

II.—King Josiah's Reform.

READING:

2 *Kings* xxii. 1-11; xxiii. 21-30.

Our reading tells us that Josiah was but a boy of eight, when, through the death of his father Amon, he was brought to the throne. It was a very troublesome lot that he thus inherited. We saw in the first lesson that Josiah's great-grandfather, Hezekiah, very

nearly suffered captivity at the hands of the Assyrians. His escape was, indeed, wonderful, and men did well to be grateful to God for continued life and peace. Hezekiah's reign lasted nearly thirty years, and his son Manasseh, who frankly accepted his position as a tributary prince to Assyria, reigned for as many as fifty-five years. We get but little information as to what went on in Manasseh's time, except with regard to one important thing,—religion. The compilers of the Books of Kings tell us particularly that, instead of trying to lift up the thoughts of his people above the level of the tribes around them, he took special interest in the 'heathen abominations,' and not only restored places of idolatrous worship which his father, as a religious reformer, had abolished, but went beyond this, in order to introduce many evil things, copied from other nations, including the dreadful practice of child-sacrifice by fire. These things were horrible to the better and wiser men of his time, and warning voices were not lacking; but apparently he paid no heed to them, in spite of the stern threats of divine punishment which they uttered against him. It seems also from the record—'Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another'—that he did not refrain from violence against those who withstood his degrading policy. In after times, when the saddest calamity came upon the people, many a pious mind assured

itself that all this evil was due to the sin which Manasseh did, and caused his people to share. Nevertheless, his long reign went on, and closed apparently peacefully.

Then Amon, a young man of twenty-two, was crowned king, and at once he disappointed any hopes the religious reformers might have had of a change for the better. He seemed bent on carrying on things just as his father had done. Soon a terrible conspiracy began in the palace, and Amon was killed, after a two-years' reign. But the conspirators reaped no advantage from their crime. A popular outburst against them brought them to their doom, and the boy Josiah was made king.

What could Josiah do—young as he was, and in such a terrible time? Clearly he was in the hands of people older than himself, and they brought him up in favour of the religious reform. They did more. While he grew up to manhood, something else 'grew up' that proved stronger than a man—it was a Book! Who wrote it, we cannot tell; but there is no doubt that the Book which proved so mighty in the cause of religious reform is preserved for us as part of the 'Book of Deuteronomy.'

In that book we find that the religious reformers of Josiah's time were so anxious to do away with the degrading worship that had these many years disgusted and pained them, that they urged as a commandment of 'Yahveh,' the God of Israel, that all the altars of

sacrifice here and there throughout their kingdom should be put down, and that only at Jerusalem should sacrifice be made. There was a famous sanctuary there, around which some of the most sacred memories of the race clung, and it had been adorned since the time of Solomon with the buildings and services of the celebrated *Temple*. 'Here,' said the reformers, 'let our people come and worship,—here, where under careful supervision they will not perform any forbidden ceremony, and where our wisest men may teach them the holy law of a dutiful and pious life.' The notion of limiting the worship of a whole people to one city and one sanctuary, seems stranger to us than it would to them. We have learned from Jesus, that in all places we may fitly worship 'the Father,' if we worship 'in spirit and in truth.' But we must remember that he lived long after Josiah's time, and mankind has had to grow in religious knowledge, as in all other kinds of knowledge. We may also remember that, though we read that Josiah's reforms extended through Samaria, the kingdom of Judah was possibly all that the 'Deuteronomic' reformers had in mind, and this was but a small bit of country, not much larger than a big English county. Thus it would not seem very far for the pious minded to travel to the capital city to worship at the appointed times. But, far or near, convenient or not, the Jerusalem Temple was represented as the one place where Yahveh had chosen 'to set His name'; and when on reading

the Book they obtained King Josiah's hearty consent, they sternly set to work to destroy all the 'high places' where the people had worshipped, and especially to demolish the signs of heathen ideas and practices wherever they found them. It was not only in out-of-the-way places that these things existed. As we saw, King Manasseh had openly favoured them, and Jerusalem itself had to be cleansed of idol shrines, and those who cherished them had to be driven away.

We may be sure that, like all reforms, this of Josiah's time met with a good deal of grumbling and opposition. Indeed, we can see pretty clearly that the reformers of that day, like those of far later times, did not hesitate to kill those whom they considered responsible for the views and practices which they themselves hated. The struggle was a fierce one. But the king was on the side of the reformers, and there were many other things to make the people think very seriously before they withstood this movement. There were the constantly threatening dangers of invasion and captivity. There was an awakening sense of purer morality and religion under the stirring appeals, mingled with the severest denunciations, of the great prophets, such as Isaiah, who had during the past century arisen in the midst of the people. And this 'Book,' which was brought forward by the reformers, and was added to by other writers till it became the book we have, spoke in the name of Moses, the great lawgiver; and it besought

the people, in words that are still most moving in their tender earnestness, to love Yahveh, their God, and to cleave to him as the God of their life, and to keep that holy law of righteousness and reverence that is neither 'far off,' in heaven or beyond the sea, nor is 'too hard' for men, but is in their own heart.

So the idolatrous customs were put down, and the earnest-hearted among the Hebrews no doubt hoped that peace and prosperity would come as the token of Yahveh's approval of their doings in His name. But, alas! the poor little kingdom of Judah was a victim of the political ambitions of other nations. An expedition of the king of Egypt, Pharaoh Necho, against the Assyrians, who were now fast losing their power, set forth on its way, and necessarily went north-eastward (see map) by Palestine. King Josiah, acting in his wisdom as best he could, rallied an army to oppose the Egyptians. The rival hosts met in the plain of Megiddo, which lies just southward of the hill country where Jesus long afterward lived, — the land of Galilee. The Hebrews were utterly defeated and poor Josiah was slain. It was in the year 609 B.C., and he had been king just over thirty years.

Terrible, indeed, was this unforeseen calamity! The little kingdom had lost its leader in the prime of his days, and lay prostrate at the mercy of a ruthless foe. What would become of it? What would become of the reform which the 'Deuteronomists' had begun? Would

anyone, in spite of disaster, still be loyal to duty and lowly toward Yahveh? Would a spirit of reckless desperation grow up, and wickedness prevail; or would the poor superstitious people all think that some other deity had been offended, and that he must be reconciled by the old practices which their ancestors had so often embraced? We shall see.

Date to fix: The Battle of Megiddo, 609 before Christ.

Questions.

1. Who was Josiah's grandfather? What character is given him in the Second Book of Kings?
2. Name Josiah's father, and say what became of him.
3. How old was Josiah when he was made king? How old when he died? Where?
4. What religious reform took place in Josiah's reign? Where can we find the substance of 'The Book' that was brought forward by the reformers?
5. What did that Book tell the people to do; and what may we learn from it?

III.—The Sons of Josiah.

READING.

2 *Kings* xxiii. 31-35; xxiv. 1-17.

The passage read tells us briefly what happened in the first years after the sad end of Josiah at Megiddo. The crown descended to four of his family in succession—three of them being sons, and one his grandson,

It was a fearful inheritance. The Egyptian King, Pharaoh Necho, after marching on into the Syrian provinces hitherto under the Assyrians, returned in three months and found the first of Josiah's hapless descendants on the throne. His name was Jehoahaz, and the writer of the 2nd Book of Kings tells us the melancholy fact that in his brief reign he had already forsaken the reforms of his father. His doom was swift. The Egyptian king seized him and put him into chains, setting up his brother as King Jehoiakim in his stead. But this change of sovereign was the least of the nation's sufferings under Necho. He crushed them by a demand for a vast sum of money, which Jehoiakim engaged to get from the unhappy people. As if this was not enough, the new king set about building costly palaces, and acted in many ways as a cruel and oppressive master. It was pointed out by the reforming party that this wickedness in the king was allied with the idolatrous practices which he revived in full force. They said if he were a worshipper of Yahveh, and of Him alone, he would not be guilty of such evil things. Certainly, if he had treasured up in his heart the exhortations of the Book of Deuteronomy he would have lived a far different life. But that famous Book seemed to have become forgotten all at once. As in England after the severe rule of the Puritans there was an age of increased levity and shamelessness, so after Josiah's stern reign there followed a widespread re-

turn to the things that seemed worst to those who had joined in his reform. The earnest words of prophets and good men were scoffed at. 'What is the use of serving Yahveh? Why trouble about doing your duty? What good will it do you? Look at your pious King Josiah—what happened at last to him?'

So too many of the people argued, while King Jehoiakim ground them down with taxation. If, however, they found an argument against the worship of Yahveh in the death of Josiah, there were abundant arguments against the newly-revived idolatry in the events of that short reign. The power of the king of Egypt was, indeed, soon broken; but it was by another foe to Judah. Southward of Assyria a new power was rising in the same land of the great rivers Tigris and Euphrates. This was *Babylon*, a name long to be remembered by the Hebrews. Its king Nabopolassar sent his son Nebuchadrezzar to drive back the king of Egypt who was, like himself, trying to become absolute master throughout that land. A great battle was fought between the two armies at *Carchemish*, on the banks of the Euphrates. The Egyptians were totally defeated, and fled. This was in the year 605 B.C.

For the next three years the Hebrews were forced to pay tribute to the Babylonian prince, Nebuchadrezzar. Then Jehoiakim revolted, little considering the great difference between the scanty means of his impoverished kingdom and those of the

mighty Babylonian generals. Nebuchadrezzar was too busy at first to attend very closely to this rebel in the west of his dominions, but the tribes nearest to Judah, remaining loyal to Babylon, took the opportunity of raiding the country of Jehoiakim. 'Yahveh sent against him bands of the Chaldeans, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the Children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it.' That is the brief record of a period that must have been filled with misery. Surrounded on every side by enemies who gave the people no respite, and living in dread of an overwhelming invasion by the great King of Babylon, what could Jehoiakim do?

Would he, under these burdens, at last turn to Yahveh and follow his father's example as a purifier of religion and an upholder of personal and national righteousness? There seemed little chance of it; but amongst the reformers there was one man who, in spite of much sorrowful foreboding, determined to plead with the young king and to win him if possible to the better side. This was *Jeremiah*, whose book of 'prophecies' is preserved in the Bible. He had been a 'prophet' or preacher for many years, and had ardently assisted in Josiah's reform. It is exceedingly likely that he had a hand in bringing forward the 'Book of Deuteronomy,' and we find much in his own prophecies that resembles that Book. But, as we have seen, the death of Josiah put an end to the

hopeful results of the labours of these reformers, and we can well understand the sadness of the prophet when he saw the course taken by Jehoiakim. It was not only in religious matters that he believed the king to be going wrong. As a politician he considered that Judah's one chance was in giving up all hopes of help from Egypt, and in making peace with Babylon. With a view to enforce his advice on the king, Jeremiah, who appears to have been prevented from speaking in public at the time, wrote out his 'prophecies' in a roll or 'book,' and sent it to him. (See *Jeremiah* xxxvi.) The things contained in this new 'book' had probably been long familiar to some who heard it read, for Jeremiah was amongst the boldest and most persistent of the reformers; but familiarity could not rob his words of their sting, and men trembled at the thought of what Jehoiakim would say or do if the prophet's 'book' came to his knowledge. And this was just what Jeremiah took care to bring about; at his request his servant Baruch took the writing into the king's presence and began to read. At last he came to a part where it was said that a terrible disaster would be brought by Babylon upon the people, and the king, who had just made up his mind to defy the Babylonians, got so angry that he would hear no more, but slashing the roll to pieces he burned the fragments at the brazier, or stove, in his room.

It was a foolish action; he could not burn the truth; and, if Jeremiah

had written falsely, events would soon show. But some people have not even yet learned that ill-temper is no argument. The prophet simply wrote out another copy, and added 'many like words' to those that had been in the first. The invasion which he expected came very soon, and King Jehoiakim, after a miserable reign of eleven years, died only just in time to escape being captured by the Babylonians. His son, Jehoiachin, grandson of Josiah, was but a youth of eighteen when he was made king. Like his uncle Jehoahaz, and his father Jehoiakim, the young king belonged to the idolatrous party; but he had only reigned three months when, during a siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, Nebuchadnezzar himself came to his army; and, probably hoping for mercy if he boldly cast himself into Nebuchadnezzar's hands, Jehoiachin, with his mother and court officers, went out and surrendered at discretion. He received little pity. Nebuchadnezzar made a captive of him, and set about 'looting' the city. Finally, having put Zedekiah, a surviving son of Josiah's, to be 'king' of the ruined state, he set off to Babylon with ten thousand of the chief inhabitants as prisoners, including 'all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, and all the craftsmen, and the smiths; none remained save the poorest sort of the people of the land.' It was in the year 597 B.C.

Amongst those who were taken captive in this 'First Captivity of Judah' was the prophet *Ezekiel*, of whom

we shall hear something by and by. The old and grief-worn Jeremiah was left behind, a sad spectator of the last sad reign and the utter destruction of the kingdom of Judah.

What a trial of his faith, and of the faith of all who had trusted in Yahveh! Yet out of their trials men often learn deeper wisdom; and some of the world's greatest thoughts, as we shall see, came forth out of this hour of Judah's affliction.

Dates: Battle of Carchemish, 605 B.C. The First Captivity of Judah, 597 B.C.

Questions.

1. Name the four kings who reigned over Judah after Josiah's death.
2. Who won the battle of Carchemish, and what effect had it on the fortunes of the Jewish people?
3. What great prophet lived in Jerusalem at this time? What do you know of his history and character?
4. When did the First Captivity of Judah take place? Where did the captives go, and what celebrated man was amongst them?

IV.—The Destruction of Judah.

READING.

Jeremiah xxxviii. 14-28; xxxix.

As we might easily guess, the kingdom of Judah was in a sad plight during the years between the 'First Captivity' of Judah, in 597 B.C., and its final destruction, in 586. The Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, had

set the last of Josiah's sons on the throne of his fathers, but it was evidently only on the condition that he would be obedient to the conqueror's will. It would have taken a very strong and capable ruler to rescue the people from their misery, and secure for them anything like peace and prosperity. Unhappily, Zedekiah—to give him the name which Nebuchadrezzar forced him to take—was neither strong nor wise; and the historian of the Second Book of Kings says he persevered in the idolatrous practices favoured by Jehoiakim, so that he lost the support and counsel that he might have obtained from the religious reformers.

We saw that only 'the poorest sort of the people of the land' were left behind when Nebuchadrezzar carried off the first captives of Judah; doubtless the foremost reformers, as men of intelligence and position, would be marked out for this captivity. But one, as we saw, was left behind. This was Jeremiah. The book containing his prophecies tells us some very interesting things about what happened in these sad years. Amongst them we find that those who remained behind were disposed, in accordance with the usual views of their nation, to regard the unhappy captives as undergoing punishment for their sins; while they boasted that they who had escaped captivity thus far must have been better people than the others, or they, too, would have suffered. But Jeremiah knew it was not so, and he was

learning much at this time. He saw very clearly that amongst the sufferers were some of the best men of the time, and he declared his belief that, though they were suffering now, it must be for their ultimate good; and, as for the bad men who were boasting of their deliverance, he was sure that their wickedness would not go for ever unpunished.

And shortly, once again, in spite of all their bitter experience, there arose a fresh spirit of revolt against the Babylonian supremacy. It was not all due to the Jewish remnant. The heads of the tribes and communities in the lands nearest to them—such as those of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon—sent messengers to Zedekiah, to see if he would join them in a league of rebellion. Opinion was divided at Jerusalem. Some 'prophets' declared that the Babylonian yoke would soon be broken, and urged Zedekiah to join the rebels. Jeremiah took the opposite side, and, whether owing to his arguments or some other cause, the conspiracy failed, and for a few years no further movement of the kind showed itself, although the general discontent grew more and more.

Away, in the land of Babylon, there was naturally a similar bitter feeling; but Jeremiah took the risk of giving the captives the unwelcome advice to settle down as peacefully as they could, and make the best of their circumstances. Of course, this was considered a very unpatriotic thing, and Jeremiah became more unpopular than ever.

At last Zedekiah thought his chance had come. A new king, Hophra, had arisen in Egypt, who was ready to dispute the supremacy with the Babylonians. Despite all remonstrances, the king of Judah joined in alliance with Egypt, and when his rebellion had been reported to Nebuchadrezzar, that king once more sent an army against Jerusalem. He meant to make an end of it this time, and the people evidently felt this, and resisted accordingly. For eighteen months, the siege of the capital continued, amid many horrors; and during this time we find Zedekiah vainly seeking a promise from Jeremiah that Yahveh would interpose on behalf of His people. Terrified by the prophet's threats and denunciations, Zedekiah tried what 'religious reform' might do. It was evidently a superstitious notion, and sprang out of no sincere desire for the cause of righteousness and truth. He was no genuine reformer, as the sequel showed.

According to an ancient law which had been too long neglected, those Hebrews who had, through poverty or other cause, come into bondage to their brethren, were to be allowed their liberty after six years' servitude. It was by observing this law that Zedekiah specially intended to prove his devotion to Yahveh. The pledge to observe it was solemnly taken by the king and his people.

Not long after this, to their intense relief, the Jews saw the departure of the Babylonian army from before their

walls. It was no lasting respite, however, for Nebuchadrezzar, who had only marched out to fight with the Egyptians before they could join forces with their Judean allies, defeated Hophra, and was soon back again besieging Jerusalem with more fierceness than ever. The interval had only been long enough to show the false-heartedness of the king and his people. Regardless of their solemn pledges, they had already resumed the ownership of the slaves whom they had so lately set free. And now the foe was beating at their gates again, as Jeremiah had constantly assured them would be the case. Mad with wrath, the prophet's foes cried out that he was a traitor in league with the Babylonians. He was cast at first into prison, and afterwards by the king's order he was detained in the sentries' quarters by the palace.

What were Jeremiah's thoughts at this time? Did he lose trust in God? His utterances show that, instead of this, he was learning that God's ways are not as ours, that the divine plans are far larger and more inclusive than the Hebrew people had been apt to imagine; and while he could not solve all the mysteries of Providence, he retained his confidence in the righteousness and goodness of God. The wreck of the system of worship and teaching which had been growing up amid many difficulties in his nation, was now clearly coming. Would it be set up again? Was there not a greater 'covenant' to be preached,—the promise of a time when men everywhere should 'know

Yahveh,' and serve the law of righteousness in their hearts? Such were the great new thoughts that were beginning to stir in his heart, some of them to become a comfort and consolation to all generations.

But for the immediate present, Jeremiah saw no hope. While the desperate people around him strained every nerve to keep out the foe, he did not cease to tell them it was no use,—they had better yield at once, and not provoke the enemy further. In their fury they cast the prophet into a foul dungeon, whence he was released only by the direction of the terrified king. We read in the chapters named at the head of this lesson, the story of the wretched Zedekiah's last interview with Jeremiah, and how he was afraid to let people know about what passed between them. And then came the final disaster. The city was taken, its walls and buildings were destroyed. The inhabitants were sifted once more, and only 'the poor of the land, which had nothing,' were left behind. The king vainly sought refuge in flight to the desert; he was caught before he reached the Jordan. His sons were slain in his presence, and then, with his eyes put out, and loaded with chains he was taken off to Babylon,—if, indeed, he lived long enough to reach the land of captivity.

Thus ended the kingdom of Judah, in the year 586 B.C. Less than forty years had passed since Josiah had set about his great reform, with such high hopes for his people's piety and pro-

sperity. And now all was in ruins. Over the contemptible dregs of the nation, the Babylonians set a Jewish officer, Gedaliah, and they instructed him, as a mark of their favour, to protect Jeremiah, and 'carry him home,' where we are told 'he dwelt among the people.' It was not for long. Gedaliah, who seems to have done his best for the miserable 'people,' and to have been an upright and generously disposed man, fell a victim to the ambition of Ishmael, one of the few descendants of the royal house who had escaped Nebuchadrezzar. This man in turn was defeated by another chief, named Johanan, who ultimately collected all the inhabitants he could, including Jeremiah, and in spite of the prophet's remonstrances led the whole company away into Egypt,—where apparently, after a short time, Jeremiah died. According to an old tradition, he was stoned to death by his wretched countrymen.

Date: Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar, and the Second or Great Captivity. 586 B.C.

Questions.

1. Who was the last king of Judah, and what was his character?
2. Tell what you know of the later history of Jeremiah.
3. Where were the captives taken, after the fall of Jerusalem in 586?
4. How long was this after the end of the Northern Kingdom?
5. What became of the 'poor,' who were left behind?

V.—In Captivity.

READING. *Psalms cxxxvii.*

This mournful song is very different from that which we read in our first lesson, and very different in the spirit of the closing verses from anything that should fall from Christian lips. It reflects, however, a mood which we can very easily understand. There must have been many yearnings amongst the captives for the land of their fathers, and their hearts would be filled with hot revengeful passions as they looked round on the splendours of the land of their exile, and remembered what they had suffered at the hands of their captors. Probably the more pious and devoted of the exiles felt the sting of their situation most deeply. Amongst the many thousands who were carried away in the two deportations, there were, it is evident, some who were neither much attached to religion nor very keen about duty. Their feelings of resentment against Babylon were no doubt real enough at first; and during the eleven years that intervened between the two deportations, those who came out in the first would fan their patriotism by the thought that a speedy return was not improbable. But when the city they had been so proud of was shattered into ruins, when there was not so much as the semblance of a government left, the outlook that became so dark to the purer patriots would tend to affect the less ardent minds in another way. Why vex themselves about a lost cause?

After all, it was possible to live in the land of Babylon. Apparently, a good many found it possible to thrive there, in spite of being in a foreign land. As the older men passed away, and the younger ones stepped into their places, the necessity of making the best of it was more and more clearly recognized.

We learn from the book of 'Ezekiel' that something of this kind went on; indeed, it is evident that there were not a few of the exiles who took with them into their captivity the same thoughts about the worship of other gods besides Yahveh that had been favoured under the kings since Josiah's death. The poor men might now plead some justification from their point of view. They had been taught that Yahveh would protect His people, but what had happened? Not only were thousands of them slain and other thousands taken into captivity, but the city where His temple had stood was now destroyed, and the temple itself lay in ruins. The gods of the Babylonians, on the other hand, had known how to take care of their people and their shrines. Here were stately temples crowded with worshippers whose abundant prosperity bore witness to the favour of the deities they served. If prosperity in our outward affairs is the infallible mark of divine approval, it was clear that it was better to worship the gods of the Babylonians! Or if that were too desperate, would it not be well to blend the kind of worship which they had inherited from their fathers with

new modes learned from these all-conquering men of Babylon?

Happily, not all the exiles were so lightly turned from their principles. During the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah there had been steadily going on—unperceived, probably, outside a little circle—a work of collecting and writing the national histories. The 'Deuteronomic' reformers had been silenced for the most part, and the reforms they had aimed at had been utterly defeated. Jeremiah, we have seen, was not to be silenced. Others, who had not his fiery courage, or whose religious temper was of a different kind while they held the same general ideas of God as he did, took sedulously to this literary work. It was not, however, merely a literary task. They looked at history as the record of Yahveh's dealing with His people, and so they took pains to put the story of their fathers into such a form as would best serve to appeal to the religious feelings of the reader. Thus their histories became a kind of sermon, constantly reminding the reader of the bond between Israel and its God. We find their handiwork in our Books of Kings.

Nor did their zeal end there. While some of the religious reformers were busy in this direction, there were others who had seized on the Deuteronomic idea of an absolutely pure and worthy worship of Yahveh, and who sought to define that worship more clearly than it had ever been defined before. This was, no doubt, the point

to which the thoughts of the *priests* were directed, especially those who most devotedly clung to the symbolic side of religious teaching. In the case of Jeremiah, who was himself of a priestly family, it was no doubt a much more natural thing to appeal to his countrymen by words than by ceremonies; though he, too, with a true oriental instinct, often made a kind of parable out of things which he saw or invented for the purpose. There were others who tried to impress the people with the idea of the reverence due to Yahveh by means of rites carefully and diligently performed. Such a priest was Ezekiel, the author of the prophecies in the book bearing his name.

We find that this devoted man took a leading part amongst the exiles of the First Captivity. Seven or eight years before the final destruction of Jerusalem he began to address them as a 'prophet,' and so for about twenty years, apparently, he continued his work. We can easily believe it was a difficult task to cheer and console the dejected, to rebuke those who were falling away from the pure worship of Yahveh, to meet the objections of those who were disposed to think hard things of their God, and to hold up before their eyes such a picture of the future as would encourage them to live on as the faithful servants of Him who had seemed to pour out unmeasured wrath upon His people. All this, however, Ezekiel tried to do. He sturdily refused to let the first captives be crushed

under the ill-timed reproaches of those who declared that the captivity was a direct manifestation of God's anger against them, and a proof of their special wickedness. On the other hand, he stood up against the thought of *inherited guilt*—a thought which seemed to some of the best of his companions the only explanation of their calamities. They said, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes'—done evil—'and the children's teeth are put on edge,' *i.e.* they suffer for their father's sins. Ezekiel said it was not so. Yahveh was before all things *just*; whatever might be the explanation of Israel's sufferings, their God was fair and 'equal' in His dealings with them. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' The soul that doeth well, it shall live. This was his confident assurance to them, and so long as they strove to keep Yahveh's commands they might wait in hope for His blessing.

Ezekiel's task as an inspirer of trust was rendered doubly hard when the whole land of Israel was laid waste, and when its only inhabitants were the mere refuse of the population that the conqueror disdained to take home with him, or were—still more contemptible in Jewish eyes—the mixed tribes of Gentiles transplanted thither from various parts by the hand of the Babylonian king. The once beautiful and prosperous country had become a desolation, a byword among the nations. How hopeless the thought of its future, especially as years rolled by and any return of its people from

captivity seemed more and more remote! Yet the indomitable faith of the pious Hebrew clung to the vision of the time when the land now desolate should become once more like 'the Garden of Eden,' and when the people of Yahveh, now so smitten and despairing, would yet arise and glorify His name—that name for whose sake, if not for His undeserving people's sake, He would restore the fallen fortunes of Judah. Did anyone say 'impossible'? But the 'Spirit of Yahveh' can make even 'dry bones' to live; only be it the aim of His servants to be faithful through the dark hours of trial.

Ezekiel's book shows us also how the minds of those who were seeking to establish a perfect system of worship of Yahveh were busy in constructing ideals of a perfect community, a real 'Holy City,' where in every act of every day the inhabitants would remind themselves that they belonged not to themselves but to Yahveh. He sketches out a dream of such a holy Jerusalem with a wealth of detail that seems strange to us; but amidst all this detail the great ideal is to be seen, and the more clearly we recognise it the better able we are to understand how it came about that a new set of religious laws grew up amongst those exiles, the substance of which we appear to have in the Book of *Leviticus* (xvii.—xxvi.).

It would be difficult and not very profitable for us to study this 'Law of Holiness.' It will be enough if we remember that these were some of

the things that occupied the thoughts of the more earnest reformers, who in the land of exile refused to mix with the ordinary population, and cherished the ideal of a community peculiar to Yahveh, even though they were torn away from Yahveh's land and could no longer worship in Yahveh's temple. They could at least preserve their separateness from the Gentile multitude; they could keep Yahveh's sabbath, and put into memorable form the great precepts, ancient or more recent, which had been given to the nation by its wisest and best; they could use this time of forced inaction in national affairs in collecting and weaving together the stories of bygone generations, and so keep alive the feeling of national unity and of national sacredness. It was thus that the older 'books' of our Bible began to take the shape in which we have them; in serving their own generation these pious exiles were bequeathing a great legacy to mankind.

We have little else to record by way of history during the years that followed the fall of Jerusalem. We learn that after the death of Nebuchadrezzar—who engaged in another great struggle with Egypt before he died—the new king, Evil-Merodach, treated kindly the captive prince Jehoiachin, whom we have seen carried away in the first captivity. Poor grandson of Josiah! His was a hard fate, and he had to wait long before that final ray of sunshine came upon him. His benefactor reigned in 561 and the year following; so that

we have here a date twenty-five years later than the second captivity, and more than thirty-five since the first.

How much longer would they have to wait, who still trusted that Yahveh would grant deliverance to His people?

Date: Prince Jehoiachin ('Coniah') receives kindness from Evil-Merodach, 561.

Questions.

1. Who was Ezekiel? When was he taken from his country, and where to? (See *Ezek.* i. 1-3.)
2. What were his difficulties as a prophet? How did he meet them?
3. Do you know what 'books' were being put into shape among the exiles in Babylon?
4. What do we mean by a 'holy' people? Where do we find the 'Law of Holiness'?
5. When did Jehoiachin receive kindness from the Babylonian King?

VI.—The Persian Deliverer.

READING. *Isaiah* xlv. 6-28.

We have turned to a book of prophecies which bear the name of 'Isaiah.' But the real Isaiah lived long before the captivity, and, therefore, we should be going backwards and not forwards in our story, if this chapter in the book came from him. What is the explanation? It is simply that, in the book called 'Isaiah,' we have a double collection of prophecies, the first ending with the thirty-ninth chapter, and the second opening with the fortieth, and

including what follows. The former section is generally older—nearly 200 years older in some parts—than the writings in the second part. Isaiah was writing before the fall of the northern kingdom,—the author of the forty-fourth chapter was among the captives in Babylon. Was his name Isaiah also? It is very improbable that this was so. We do not know his name, nor that of any of the writers who seem to have caught his tone, and to have contributed some share to this section of the book.

Yet, what a wonderful collection of writings has come to us from this great 'Unknown,' and his helpers! Some of the noblest and most glorious utterances in the Bible, nay, in the world's literature, are here. Truly, we are often ignorant about the greatest men.

In our last lesson, we saw that the captives in Babylon were obliged to settle down into the position of exiles, and although the son of Nebuchadnezzar showed favour to their long-captive prince, his reign was a very short one, and the Jews as a body remained much as before. The years passed on, but not unfruitfully. They never do, where hearts are earnest and minds seek the highest truth. Whoever the 'Second Isaiah' was—to give him that name—he had evidently grown up into a religious stature far higher than most of his nation in preceding generations, and probably he stood very much alone in his best thoughts even in his own generation. Was he an old survivor of the Second

Captivity, or a young man who had never seen the land of which the stories and hymns of his people made so much? Was he of priestly ancestry, like Ezekiel and Jeremiah, or sprung from the common people, like Amos in the olden time? Who taught him the secrets of eloquence and quickened his sense of religious truth? All these things are hidden from us; but from the past he still speaks of faith and hope and generous-hearted love to all mankind.

This thing we know. He lived in stirring times, such as might well appeal to any really living mind. The great Babylonian empire, with all its might and splendour, was seen to be in peril. It was not Egypt now that disputed with it the supreme place. A Power from the East was the coming conqueror. Evil - Merodach, whose name we have met before, had but just ceased to be king, when a young and mighty leader sprang to the head of the Persians. This was that *Cyrus* whose name the prophet introduces in our chapter. This famous monarch and soldier had a career of brilliant victory. First he subdued the Medes, a people whose country lay north of Persia. Four years later, marching into Asia Minor, he defeated Croesus, the king of Lydia, and an ally of the king of Babylon. It was a warning to that Power that its days were numbered.

Who so quick to perceive the chance of coming change—and possibly for the better—as the Jewish captives! Who so eager to hope that the cruel

hand of their conquerors might now be smitten from their neck, and they, perhaps! be sent back to their own land, there to worship Yahveh, their God, in His own land and in His own temple! It was a great hope, such as would set their hearts throbbing and unseal fresh springs of prophetic utterance amongst them.

The 'Second Isaiah' felt this great flood of emotion in all its fulness. He broke out into strains of noblest poetry, filled with tenderest comfort and brightest hopes. Yahveh's people had sinned, it was true; but, by this time, Jerusalem had suffered 'double for all her sins,' and Yahveh would crown her latter days with a glory never yet known. 'Oh! if the people were but fit for blessings so great,—if they had only kept themselves free from the superstitions of the land of captivity! But the prophet saw some actually bowing down to idols, as the Babylonians did! It was not simply a horrible sight—to the prophet there was something almost insane about it. He pours scorn and ridicule in the highest degree upon the idea of carving a block of wood into some shape or other, and while using the chips to warm oneself, bowing down in worship before the hewn figure. Away with such abominable and unmanly nonsense!

Think, he would say, of the vastness of this world! Look at its far-extending lands, consider the isles far off upon the blue sea! Turn your eyes at night to the glorious heavens, majestic

everywhere, most glorious in those eastern lands; ponder on the greatness that is behind this visible greatness. Empires rise and fall,—ONE there is that is from everlasting to everlasting, the ever-strong, the ever-wise, tender as a shepherd to the least of his flock. *Can* you, can anyone bow down to a block, and think it a worthy representation of a God like this!

Such was the appeal of the 'Second Isaiah' to those who had fallen away into the customs of Babylon, unmindful of the higher call to a purer worship. And with this appeal he blended new views of human destiny, such as the Hebrews had rarely, if ever, conceived before. Not only earth and sky, the isles and the stars are under that divine Sovereign; empires and races of men are alike subject to His control. He appoints them to do His will,—although they may not know Him, but may worship this or that 'god'—though there is *no* God but He! Clear and unmistakeable at last the great truth of 'Monotheism' rings out, never to be forgotten by 'Isaiah's' people; no more can they speak as if there were many gods, one for each nation, and theirs supreme. There is no other God.

Is it then, that other nations have no God at all? Would 'Isaiah' say this? Would he not rather incline to the saying of St. Paul, uttered six hundred years later: 'Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him set I forth to you?' Certainly, he looks upon Cyrus as Yahveh's 'anointed,' His 'Messiah'

—a word to become very notable in the story of Hebrew religion; and, as one by one the nations learn of Yahveh's people how fitly to think of the only God, and how to serve His holy law, they, too, shall become His people.

'Isaiah' did not, of course, utter all his messages at once. From the first glimpse of the great hope that set him 'prophesying' to the time when it was actually justified, and the Hebrews were at liberty to return, there were years to pass; not many, but enough to try the faith and courage even of the sincere believer in Yahveh. Why these sickening delays? Why all the past of sorrow and desolation that even Yahveh's faithful ones had suffered?

It was a bitter cry, and it has its echo to-day in hearts that are crushed by the sorrows of life. Why do the *good* suffer thus? It was a problem that occupied man's minds among the Jews then and afterwards, and their literature shows us some of the answers that men attempted to give. 'Isaiah's' solution of the problem is the more interesting to us because, through the application of it to the case of Jesus Christ, it has found a permanent place in Christian thought. It was this: The good and faithful among the Hebrews, whom he personified as 'Yahveh's servant,' suffered, not as the traditional view would have it, in consequence of their own sins; nor as another view had it, in order to benefit by the 'chastening of the Lord;' but as an innocent sharer in the

penalty that is due to the guilty, to 'bear' their sins, and suffer for their sake, and so bring about in their hearts that change from which alone a good life can result.

We cannot here do more than mention this great and fruitful thought. It has been misused, but it is still among the deepest convictions of religion. We are bound up together in such a way that loss and pain often fall on those who are not at fault. Let those who suffer thus be patient and firm in their hope that He who makes this so has not made it in vain, but will help and bless for good all who 'bear the sin of the world,' in any degree.

The great deliverance did come at last. In the year 538 B.C., the Persian conqueror, having cleverly turned aside the waters of the river Euphrates that flowed through the city of Babylon, marched his soldiers into the city, and took its defenders unawares. The huge empire of Babylon fell with his victory that day. Cyrus had fulfilled the passionate desires and expectations of the Jewish leaders, and had brought low the tyrant that had so long held them in thrall. Among his first political acts was the issue of an edict in favour of the captives. Doubtless, he perceived that there was an extraordinary spirit in these people; possibly some of their religious enthusiasm made an impression on his mind, for he was a man of remarkable mental gifts, and was quite open to new light. Be that as it may, he put an end to the compulsory

stay of the Jews in Babylon. Let those who wished to do so, return to their native land. So ran the king's command, — better have contented people under his sway than slaves murmuring and ready to revolt. At last, the Captivity was at an end. An expedition was soon on foot, seeking again the dear land of Israel.

Dates: Cyrus defeats Croesus at Sardis, 546 B.C. Cyrus takes Babylon and sets the Jews at liberty, 538 B.C.

Questions.

1. Who was Cyrus, and why is he important in Jewish history?
2. What great prophet lived at this time, and what did he teach?
3. When were the captives set free by Cyrus? How long after the 'Second Captivity'?

VII.—The First Return.

READING. *Psalm cxxvi.*

What a delightful change is here! No longer do we listen to the sad and bitter cry of despairing captives, as in *Psalm cxxxvii.* (see Lesson v.), but all is gladness, thanksgiving, and tender hope. This psalm gives forth the note of a devout joy in the merciful providence that at last seemed to have verified itself to Israel. Even the heathen must see that 'Yahveh is mindful of His own.'

With feelings like these the great preparations that were necessary for the return to Palestine were made. It

was a long journey, over 500 miles, and the greater part lay through country little or no better than a desert, with no great towns or well-stored villages where food could be obtained for the travellers. The old record contained in *Ezra ii.* says that the host of those who accepted Cyrus's permission to go back to the home-land numbered nearly 50,000 people (including over 7,000 servants, men and women). We can easily see that to provide for the support of so vast a multitude a large stock of food-stuffs had to be collected. Besides food for the journey there must be provision for the first months, at least, of their life in the old country to which they were returning; for its ruined towns and untilled fields could afford them nothing, and they must wait some time before any harvest could be sown and reaped. Then there were tools to be bought, and clothing and other necessities to be gathered, besides getting together such articles of property as the travellers would wish to take into their new homes. According to the book of *Ezra*, Cyrus also permitted the Jews to carry back the sacred vessels which, to their horror, they had seen taken from the temple of Yahveh and put into the temples of the Babylonian gods; while there was also a great deal of treasure bestowed on the travellers by such of their Jewish brethren as did not accompany them.

We do not know how the decision was made as to who should go and who remain behind. But it is clear

that the company was as carefully organised as possible, and that a special object with the organisers was to provide for that truly worthy worship of Yahveh, the ideal of which had been shaped by Ezekiel and his priestly companions. There were many difficulties connected with this matter, among them one concerning the priests of different rank or caste amongst them.

The 'Levites,' as the common country priests were called, had lost their occupation when the worship of Yahveh was limited to the temple at Jerusalem; and the 'Zadokites,' who had been the priests in authority in that city, regarded themselves as quite superior to these Levites. By Ezekiel and his friends the mark of separation between them was deepened, and the Levites came in time to be quite an inferior class of religious workers. We may be sure that there was a good deal of grumbling on their part, and none who sympathised with them would let this process of degradation go on without protest. According to the old record to which we have referred, there were only a few 'Levites' in the company that set forth from Babylon, while the number of priests of 'the sons of Zadok' was very large indeed.

However the selection was made, in time all was ready for the start, and, probably many months after Cyrus had given permission, the great 'trek' was made. A Persian officer (it seems), named Sheshbazzar, was appointed to

attend to the settlement of the returning Jews in their old country; and a prince of the house of David, Zerubabel, the grandson of Jehoiachin, marched with them. No doubt the patriotic hopes of the people rested chiefly on this young man. The prophets had often declared their belief that the throne of David would be exalted not only to all its former greatness, but to a height of glory never yet seen. Was this the coming Messiah before whose majesty even the victories of Persia itself should lose their lustre? At present, although their joy at the possibility of returning was great, they had grounds enough for taking a very sober view. As from stage to stage of their journey they left the prosperous lands of Mesopotamia farther behind, they came more closely into the presence of grim realities which took the glow out of their dreams. The land which they reached at last was either in the hands of strangers hostile to them, or where it was free from these undesirable inhabitants it was a scene of desolation. The site of Jerusalem itself was covered with ruins. Any old men in the company who could remember what the city was like in the days before the Captivity would be moved to tears at the sight. The bravest and stoutest-hearted among them would feel that it was a hard task to rebuild a kingdom from such materials.

And yet can we not imagine the solemn service of thanksgiving and supplication with which they would re-

dedicate 'the holy hill of Zion' to its old uses? The 'High-Priest'—for so he was called now—stood in the midst of the assistant priests of various degree and offered sacrifice to Yahveh in the place which, as the Deuteronomist had said, He had chosen to 'set His name there.' Great words of the Law were repeated; songs of praise broke forth from the bands of singers and musicians. A new chapter in the history of Israel had begun.

It is evident that the difficulties of the position pressed heavily upon the people. It was not only that they had to repair and reconstruct, to build walls and houses, to re-open the choked-up wells, and to clear the long-neglected fields and vineyards of stones and weeds. They found themselves in the midst of people with whom they had no sympathy—the descendants of the dregs of the land, and of the aliens who had been introduced by the Babylonians, or who had migrated from all parts of the wilderness lands around into the more fertile valleys of Palestine. The temper of strict isolation which had been fostered among the Jews of the captivity was now deeply ingrained. It was not a churlish but a religious thing to them to keep separate and unmixed as far as possible. They would not worship with these strangers, and they did not want their help if offered. Such a temper inevitably provoked retaliation, and many a difficulty was put in the way of progress by the people of the land. To add to their troubles they had a series of bad

harvests. Years came and went, and these hindrances proved so great that notwithstanding the religious enthusiasm of their first months in the old country the temple itself remained unrestored; and men like the prophets Haggai and Zechariah bitterly reproached their brethren for neglecting the 'house of Yahveh.'

It was sixteen or seventeen years after the First Return when these prophets pressed for the restoration of the temple. Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon, had died in 529 B.C. His successor, Cambyses, made wars against Egypt, in the course of which, no doubt, the people of Palestine suffered considerably by disturbance and levies of men and food as the army marched to and from the seat of war. The result of these campaigns, we may notice, was the subjection of Egypt to Persian over-lordship for nearly two centuries. Following Cambyses another celebrated Persian monarch arose—Darius—in whose reign, as we shall see, events of the utmost importance in the world's history took place. But the thing of present importance to us is that it was just after his accession that the Jews took heart again and successfully finished their Second Temple. They had first, however, to satisfy Darius that there was nothing seditious in their zeal for re-building, and this they were happily able to do by an appeal to the edict of Cyrus. So the work went on, in spite of great cost and difficulties, under Zerubbabel and Joshua, the 'High-Priest.' Haggai and Zech-

ariah had effectually stirred the public conscience. Their reproaches were now no longer just. Yahveh's people had done their best; and His holy temple, in all its new beauty, was consecrated in the year 516, just seventy years after its destruction at the time of the second captivity. It was about a hundred years since Josiah tried to reform the religion of the land. How full of history that century had been!

Was it at the consecration of the Second Temple that they sang for the first time the 118th Psalm, which begins 'O give thanks unto Yahveh, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever'—which speaks of the opening of the 'gates of righteousness' in the day which Yahveh has made? Few of the sacred songs of Zion would be more appropriate, none that more triumphantly rejoices in some such signal mercy as that which the Jews recognised in the raising of their Second Temple from the ashes of the First. This psalm, we are told, was one that was sung with others in after days in the celebration of the Passover Feast. We are also told that Jesus and his disciples 'sang a hymn' on that Passover night when he shared with them his last meal on earth. Was his parting hymn an echo of the joy of this ancient festival of more than five centuries before? Perhaps so. In his case, also, it was true that 'the stone which the builders rejected became the head of the corner.'

Date: Dedication of the Second Temple, 516 B.C.

Questions.

1. How many Jews are said to have joined in the 'First Return'? When did it take place?

2. What prince of the House of David was with them?

3. What difficulties had the returned Jews in the work of restoring their city to order and their land to prosperity?

4. What did Haggai and Zechariah, the prophets, chiefly urge upon the people?

5. When was the Second Temple dedicated? Who was the 'High-Priest'?

6. How long was it after the time of Josiah?

VIII.—Ezra and Nehemiah.

READING. *Nehemiah* i. and ii.

These chapters have been chosen, not because they tell us the things that happened next after the events narrated in our last lesson, but because, besides their special interest, they may very well serve as a memorable picture of a most important though dim and somewhat lengthy period of Jewish history. Before we deal with their contents, let us remind ourselves of the situation in which the people found themselves in the years following the First Return. We must remember that there were, roughly speaking, about 50,000 of them,—the population of a fair-sized modern town; but by no means of a province. Probably small

groups or families migrated after them, now and then; but the Jewish population must have been sparse for a long time. No doubt most of them settled in or near Jerusalem; but in some cases they must go a little further away in search of more eligible ground for culture or for other reasons. Thus, in spite of the strict feelings of separateness between Jew and Gentile which the priests were doing all they could to foster, there was inevitably some degree of contact between the settlers and the mixed 'people of the land.' As years passed on, this intercourse evidently became more common. Probably the Jew, feeling secure in being in 'Yahveh's land,' found his Gentile neighbour not so bad as he might be, and the Gentile might turn out after all to be really half-a-Jew, a descendant of one of the poorer Judeans who had been left behind, or of one of the ancient tribes who had straggled back to the west. Very likely, also, the distinction between the Jew and his Palestinian neighbour was by this time less evident in the matter of religion than it used to be, unless, indeed, when the services of the temple were considered—these were getting more and more to be loaded with ceremonials of quite a peculiar kind. But away in the valleys, where farmsteads and villages began once again to nestle, simpler usages were necessary, and in these the marks of separation were less visible.

Thus the populations drew gradually together, and while away in Babylon

the Jews still resident there were dreaming of an ideal Jerusalem where Yahveh's people were kept scrupulously distinct from all others, there was, in fact, a gradual blending going on by marriage and social intercourse. It seems that this feature of life in the old country was unknown to the Babylonian Jews. They cherished the thought of Israel's uniqueness among the nations, and remained quite distinct from their neighbours. The busy literary labours which had been set on foot by the Deuteronomic reformers belonging to the First Captivity had been continued for more than a hundred years; and, as the different stories and laws of their people were gradually woven together into much the composite form in which we now have them, these diligent students and writers, dwelling so largely on an idealised past, seemed to have cherished notions which proved delusive as to the state of things in the restored capital and its neighbourhood.

The first rude shock came upon one of the most celebrated of their number, Ezra by name, who appears to have been moved by religious motives to head another great migration from Babylon to Judea. It is possible that some message from the old country began this movement, but we do not hear of it. We are told that Ezra, 'a priest' and 'scribe,' in the reign of Artaxerxes, went with about 1,500 Jews to settle at Jerusalem. Before we consider what he found there, let us ask who Artaxerxes was, and how

long a time had passed since Darius had given leave to build the Second Temple.

King Darius, the first of that name, reigned from 521 to 486 B.C. It was in his reign that the Persian host, after invading Asia Minor to quell a rising of Greekish states, proceeded across the narrow seas to make war on the home-land of the Greeks. In the year 490 the famous battle of Marathon was fought, when a few brave Athenians stood out victoriously against the enormous forces of the Persians, and earned a deathless name. Darius died before the end of this struggle with the Greeks. The battles of Thermopylæ, Salamis, and Platæa, in which the Persians were defeated, proved decisive. Xerxes, the son of Darius, who had succeeded to the crown of his father, reluctantly abandoned the attempt to conquer the European Greeks, and retired to the East. It was in the year 465 B.C. that Artaxerxes I., the son of Xerxes, succeeded him; and it was in the seventh year of the new reign that Ezra departed from Babylon to Jerusalem.

This brings us to the year 458, so that a long time had passed since the days of Zerubbabel—a time in which many changes had taken place. If the Jews of the First Return had become in any degree less ardent than they were at one time, less particular as to keeping aloof from other people, the Jews of Babylon had increased in learning, probably also in wealth and importance in the State, and certainly

in a sense of the vast superiority of Jewish ideas and Jewish worship to all others. The prophetic fervour of the days of the 'Second Isaiah' had died away. Men had no great inspirations to add to the literature of their nation. They had settled down to make as perfect as they could the 'Law of Moses'—the collection of ancient writings which we possess in the Pentateuch; and to cultivate the religious life by scrupulous observance of the principle of 'Holiness.'

Ezra was evidently a man of this stamp. He was a master in the old literature, a deep student of its antique forms; he was zealous for the sacred institutions of his people. Things had not gone so well in Jerusalem as had been hoped—indeed, they had gone far from well. The walls were still dilapidated; men were discouraged. The prophesied golden age had not come. The Persians were still supreme, and though they allowed much liberty the Jews were unmistakeably under a foreign yoke that would not soon be broken. So Ezra had enough to do when he sought to raise his brethren out of their troubles. He seems to have set about it in earnest, and especially to have aimed at the entire reorganisation of the temple-worship according to the latest Code of Laws drawn up and arranged in Babylon. He trusted in Yahveh so entirely that he declined any military protection for his expedition, notwithstanding that he was carrying with it a large amount of treasure such as would only

too easily tempt the lawless tribes of the Arabian desert. And when Jerusalem was safely reached he at once summoned the Persian officials, as well as the heads of his own people in order that the work of beautifying the 'house of God' might begin without delay.

But something stopped him suddenly. What was it? It was the evidence that reached him that there were many among the Jews at Jerusalem who had married with the 'people of the land.' They had taken 'strange wives,' instead of keeping strictly to families of unmixed Jewish blood. In his horror Ezra burst into lamentations and reproaches. He so moved the people that they agreed to hold a solemn fast in penitence for this sin; and a huge concourse was brought together to this service, which was marked by signs of the utmost consternation as the people stood in the 'open space before the temple, trembling because of this matter and for the great rain.' An effort was then made to root out this evil from their midst; but in spite of the solemn fast just mentioned Ezra seems to have found circumstances too strong for him. No doubt the friends of the 'strange wives' were up in arms against him. He urged that the walls of Jerusalem should be rebuilt; but some of his enemies persuaded the Persian king that sedition was at the back of this proposal to strengthen the fortress city, and the work was stopped. Ezra's reform was defeated for the present.

Then, about thirteen years after, another Babylonian Jew—Nehemiah—was moved to help his brethren in the west. Nehemiah was neither a priest nor a scribe. He was cup-bearer to the king, and evidently a courtier held in honour at the palace in Shushan, the capital, which lay eastward of Babylon. We see from Nehemiah's position that the Jews were by no means necessarily despised in the empire where after being captives they had adopted to remain. Nehemiah having heard a dismal account from a Jerusalem Jew of the state of affairs in that city, secured a very favourable commission from the king to go as Governor and remedy these things. We have read how he came to the city and took that solitary ride around its ruined ramparts, and found it so sadly different from the idealised city of Babylonian Jewish poetry. His memoirs go on to tell us, in most interesting passages, how in spite of the hostility of local chieftains he and the Jews, inspirited by his words and presence, built the walls once more. He seems to have had even the 'prophets' of his day, such as they were, against him. But he was in earnest, and, besides, he was a man in authority; and so the work was done.

And now this pious and able Jew combined with Ezra to hallow his people once more, and to impress upon them a fresh reform. The ceremony of dedicating the new walls of the city was followed by a solemn meeting held

in the 'broad space that was before the water-gate,' and Ezra from a raised platform read from early morning till noon the precepts of the 'priestly Code,' and a commentary or explanation by certain Levites accompanied the reading. The people were so much affected by the solemn words of the laws and precepts that they wept aloud at the close; and it took all Nehemiah's cheery good sense to turn the day into one of sober rejoicing in the possession of Yahveh's holy law. And so on succeeding days these religious exercises were kept up, until at the close a formal covenant was signed and sealed, by the chief men of the city and by priests and Levites, to maintain this law. We must defer to another lesson any inquiry into all that this meant and how far the plan succeeded. It need only be added here that Nehemiah did not go back to Shushan till he had been about twelve years Governor of Jerusalem. He had done well as a restorer of his nation; but, as we shall see, not quite so well as he had had hoped.

Dates: The Persian - Greekish struggle, 490-480 B.C. Xerxes I., King, 485-465 B.C. Artaxerxes I., 465-424 B.C. Ezra's 'Return' (with 1,500), 458 B.C. Nehemiah made Governor, 445 B.C. The Reading of the Priestly Law, 444 B.C. Nehemiah's Return to Shushan, 433 B.C.

Questions.

1. Who was Ezra? When did he lead a fresh band of Jews from Babylon, and how many composed it?

2. At what was he shocked on arriving at Jerusalem?

3. Who succeeded in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem? When?

4. What followed the dedication of the walls?

IX.—The High-Priests and the Temple.

READINGS.

Psalms cxxii. ; Zechariah iii.

In these two passages we have a glimpse given to us of two things that became more and more important in the eyes of the Jews as time went on. The psalm bears witness to the Jewish feeling with regard to the 'House of Yahveh'—the Temple; and the chapter from the prophecies of Zechariah affords us a fanciful picture or 'vision' of the chief officer connected with the Temple—'the High-Priest.' In order to understand their importance, let us recall what we have seen as to the condition of affairs at Jerusalem in the century after the first return of the captives from Babylon.

There was no Kingdom of Judah any longer, and therefore no king. The country was included among the many states dependent on the Persian Government, and a Persian officer had the chief command over it, just as a ruler appointed by the British Government has charge of one of our numerous dependent states. It seems that at times the governorship was entrusted to men who were actually Jews, but they were still officers acting under

the sovereignty of Persia. Thus Zerubbabel, the grandson of King Jehoiachin, who was amongst the first group of returned captives, had the post of honour for a number of years; and Zechariah seems to have cherished very high hopes that this prince of the House of David would be the great Messiah, or 'anointed' King, dreamed of by the older prophets; while Haggai, another prophet who lived at the same time, was even bolder than Zechariah in expressing his belief in Zerubbabel's kingly destiny. But this expectation, like many others, came to nothing, and there were no other Jewish prince-governors appointed after Zerubbabel's death. The next Jew we read of as set in authority over his people, but still subject to the Persian ruler, was Nehemiah, and he, as we have seen, had no pretensions to royal dignity.

But side by side with Zerubbabel, in the prophecies of Zechariah, we find the stately figure of the 'High-Priest,' Joshua. The prophet represents him as opposed by 'the Adversary,' whom he speaks of as 'Satan' (the word means 'Adversary'), and as being at first clothed in filthy garments. But these are taken away, and he is clothed in better garments, and has a 'fair mitre,' or diadem, put upon his head. We need not now try to discover all that the prophet meant by his 'vision,' but the picture he shows will serve to remind us of the rising dignity of the man who was at the head of the Temple worship. What precise change

took place when the 'chief-priest,' as he used to be called at Jerusalem, took the title of 'High-Priest' we cannot tell, but it is clear that his office became very important. If the Jews had no king, they had a religion; and the less power exercised by their chief men in political affairs, the more prominently the High-Priest's office stood forth amongst them. Indeed, from this time onwards, the High-Priesthood seems to have been rather like that of a kind of sovereignty than of a personal ministry, for the office descended from father to son, and became the subject of much ambition among the members of the family that held it.

We must guard against forming a wrong impression about the High-Priests of the Jews. We might think of them all as the New Testament writers have pictured one or two of them, but we should do them great injustice to brand them all as proud and pitiless men. On the other hand, we cannot think of them all as being perfect models of saintly men. Priests and ministers in all ages have had their faults. In the Book of Nehemiah we find that after that good man had been back to Shushan, the Persian capital, and had returned once more to Judea, he found that the High-Priest of his time had become friendly with a bitter enemy of his, viz., Tobiah; and that the grandson of this High-Priest had married the daughter of another enemy, viz., Sanballat. These two men, along with others, had been

amongst the strongest opponents of Nehemiah when he was building the ruined walls of Jerusalem; and here was Eliashib, the High-Priest, actually connecting himself by marriage with these 'strangers' and foes of his people! Nehemiah was very angry, as we can easily understand. Only a short time before the 'strange wives' had been put away, and a new covenant had been made to keep clear of all such alliances with those who were not 'Yahveh's people.' And now, the very man who ought to have been most zealous to keep this covenant had flagrantly broken it. Nay, more; Eliashib had not been just to the 'Levites,' who, according to the 'law' publicly read by Ezra and accepted by the people, should have had a proper allowance given them from the tithes and offerings.

It is clear from this, and other indications, that Nehemiah's reform was by no means accepted by all his brethren; and he had to take strong measures to make them obey the 'law' as it had been brought before them. He drove Eliashib's grandson away—'I chased him from me,' he says. All the 'foreigners' being driven out in this manner, there was hope that this latest reform would be loyally carried out.

It is interesting to remark that, if a passage in the historical works of Josephus relates to this event, as it is thought to do, the foundation of a rival temple in Samaria, on Mount Gerizim, was one result of Nehemiah's

policy; for there we read that on the expulsion of a member of the High-Priest's family in consequence of such a marriage, a large number of priests and Levites followed him and began that worship in the 'mount' by the Jacob's Well which was so much despised by the Jews, and to which reference is made in the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John. But this event may have been at a later date.

Later on, somewhere about the year 400 B.C., a terrible crime was committed by one of two brothers who both wanted to be High-Priest. They were sons of Joiada, who succeeded the Eliashib mentioned above. The younger brother was named Joshua—a common name among the Jews—and he was very friendly with the Persian governor of the country at the time. So he thought he might get this officer's help in setting aside his elder brother, Johanan, who ought by rights to succeed his father. The quarrel reached such a pitch that at last Johanan killed his brother in the Temple itself. Bagoses, the governor, being no doubt very angry at the death of his favourite, ordered that the Jews should pay a heavy tax as a punishment, and the tax was levied on every lamb slain in the daily sacrifice. This burdensome fine was continued for seven years, so that both Johanan and the people generally had good cause to regret the desecration of the Temple by such a deed of violence.

But we may be quite sure that there were many good people who needed no

such penalty to remind them of the awfulness of thus profaning the 'House of Yahveh.' There might be some who looked upon Ezra and Nehemiah as narrow-minded and over-zealous men, and who resented the reforms these leaders introduced. But it is clear that many more felt that the reformers were right. They felt that they should do all in their power to keep Judah and its worship free from all that they thought unworthy of the holy God, Yahveh. To such men it was an object of the utmost care to make the Temple as beautiful and its ceremonies as solemn as possible. They delighted to see the stately processions of priests and Levites in their robes, to watch the elaborate performance of 'offerings' and 'sacrifices' which were ordered by the 'law.' When young Jewish lads and girls visited the Holy Temple for the first time they were carefully impressed with the meaning of these things and they grew up with the feeling that by means of this worship they not only pleased God but hallowed themselves and their country to His service.¹

These feelings did not take possession of the minds of the people all at once. It was long after Ezekiel's dream of an ideally 'holy' city, long after the building of the second Temple, and probably years after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah that the Jews generally came to be thoroughly im-

bued with these thoughts. But gradually the 'law' established by the priests became the unquestioned standard of religious practice; and, through the long years that passed before the land saw any very striking political change, this religious change was becoming more and more visible. There were, no doubt, events of much interest to the people in other directions, but there was no interest so great and so lasting as that which centred in the Temple and the Law. There were now and again signs of the old spirit of revolt. For instance, not long after Nehemiah's time the Egyptians made themselves independent of the Persians, and perhaps some of the Jews had an idea of trying to follow their example. Later on we hear that 'the inhabitants of the sea-coast' revolted; and probably among them there were some Jews, for later still, in the reign of Artaxerxes III., about 350 B.C., there was a determined rising against Persia, which was severely put down, and so many prisoners were taken away to the East that the event has been spoken of as the 'Third Captivity of Judah.' There were signs, however, that just as the Babylonian conquerors of Judah had fallen before a new empire, so the Persians themselves would before long have to yield to another great power—the Greeks. These people were now at the height of their glory, and many celebrated men were to be found amongst them.

But as to Judah, the whole of this period of history has become very dim;

¹ For a description of the Temple of later times—no doubt modelled on the earlier institution—see Prof. Carpenter's 'Life in Palestine.'

and all we trace with certainty is the continued subjection of the Jews under the Persians, and their steady advance in the ideas and worship associated with the Temple and the 'Law.' We have considered the subject of the 'Temple'—in the next lesson we must look a little more closely at the 'Law.'

Dates: Nehemiah's Second Visit to Jerusalem, 432 B.C. Socrates and Plato, the Greeks, 430-400 B.C. Johanan kills his Brother, 400 B.C. (?) Jews' Revolt put down; 'Third Captivity,' about 350 B.C.

Questions.

1. Who was the High-Priest in the time of the building of the Second Temple?
2. Why did Nehemiah severely treat him and his family?
3. What other High-Priest do you know of?
4. What has been called the 'Third Captivity'?
5. What do you know of the Temple Worship?

X.—The Law.

READINGS.

Deut. vi. 4-9; *Psalms* cxix. 1-16,
161-176.

Every one who has noticed this longest psalm in the Bible—and who has not?—has been struck by the frequent use in it of certain words, viz., 'statutes,' 'testimonies,' 'judgments,' 'word,' 'law.' The writer never tires of declaring his attachment to these,

or of expressing the benefits to be derived from them. He has not only made a very long poem about them, but he has also made it a very elaborate one. We find it divided into twenty-two sections of eight verses each; and at the head of each section in our Bibles there stands either a Hebrew letter, or its name in ordinary printing, or both. The fact is that all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are thus used in turn, and if we could see a Hebrew Bible we should find that the letter which stands at the head of any section is also the first letter in the first word in each of the eight verses in that section. It must have taken the writer a good deal of time and trouble to compose his poem in this way, as we should find if we tried to compose one on a similar plan in English.

At first sight the idea of making up a poem in this way seems very artificial. We do not find this kind of structure in the verses of a writer like Burns, or Cowper, or any one else at all remarkable for the poetic fervour of his compositions. One would think there was more of a task than a delight about this method of writing; yet we find a number of psalms composed on a similar plan, and they are by no means the least attractive in the collection. There are many verses in this 119th Psalm itself which are treasured in the memory of all who value their Bible.

Now we have arrived at a period in our study of the history of the Jews when we may get a fairly good notion of the way in which this psalm in

praise of the 'Law' came to be written. We must, however, be careful to avoid some ideas which used to be held on the subject.

If we had that Hebrew Bible in our hands to which reference was made just now, we should find it described on its title-page in words which may be translated, 'The Book of the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings.' We can easily understand a part at least of what is meant by 'The Prophets,' for we have in our English translation a good many prophetic writings which form a definite section of the whole Scripture. It has to be added that the Jews reckon the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings amongst the 'prophetic' books, and probably with good reason, as they give us history as it was viewed and related by the prophets and their followers. As to the 'Writings,' they contain the Psalms, Proverbs, Lamentations, the stories of 'Ruth' and 'Esther,' the 'Song of Solomon,' 'Job,' and 'Ecclesiastes,' all of which are very different from the prophecies, and do not deal with the history of the nation at large. The Jews, however, include in this section the book of Daniel, which imitates the prophetic style, and the late-written historical books — Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

We have so far left the word 'Torah' untranslated, because it is just the word which the Jews employed in speaking of their 'Law'—as, for instance, in expressions like that in the Gospels: 'All the Law and the

Prophets.' It did not mean any one special ordinance, or commandment, nor was it confined to any one of the different groups of ordinances which we find in Scripture. The fact is that 'Torah' means 'teaching' rather than 'law' in our modern sense of the word; and it is applied especially to those books of the Bible in which the Jews found not only their standard rules of conduct and of worship, but also the narratives which were meant to remind them of the special bond between their people and Yahveh. Thus the whole of the first five books in their Bible, which are classed together as the 'Pentateuch,'¹ were regarded as forming the most sacred literature of the race. In accordance with the traditional view that Moses, the deliverer from Egypt, was also the original lawgiver to Israel, these books were called 'The Books of Moses,' and although it is not said in them that Moses wrote them, this was the view which came to be held generally, and which was not doubted amongst Christians till recent times.

But by careful study men have found that it is quite impossible that any one man could have written the Pentateuch, just as it is impossible that any one architect could have raised the pile of buildings which we call 'Westminster Abbey,' where we find the stones put together in several very distinct styles and clearly of different ages. It would

¹ It is usual for scholars in our day to class 'Joshua' with these five, and to speak of the whole as the 'Hexateuch'—from the Greek 'Hex,' six.

be a useful thing if every young mind could follow carefully the lead of some of our more learned teachers and see how the Pentateuch was 'built up.' It is not only most interesting to trace this out, but it helps us to understand what a real people the Jews were, and how they were gradually taught the great lessons of religion just as men elsewhere have to be.

It will be sufficient for our present purpose if we remember that the Torah, or 'Law,' includes old legendary matter collected chiefly from two groups, known to scholars as the 'Yahvist' and 'Elohist' respectively (from the names in each applied to God), and that with these stories are bound up several codes of laws, including the Deuteronomic, which was brought forward in Josiah's time; the 'Priestly Code,' which was read out by Ezra (see lesson viii.); and other fragments of story and teaching which belong to an early period. As well as can be judged, the whole of these different writings were woven together, like different threads in a tapestry, by Babylonian Jews about the year 400 B.C. The result is a little puzzling here and there, but with care it is possible to trace the separate threads pretty well, and so to get an idea of the original documents as they came into the hands of their unknown editors.

But to the pious Jew of the fourth century before Christ the interest of the Torah was by no means a literary one. Remember that by this time the sacrifices which

were thought necessary for the act of worship could only be offered at the one sanctuary at Jerusalem, and that the Jew in his own home, which might be distant from the city, had to nourish his soul with this record, which told him, as he believed, the very will of Yahveh, and assured him of the divine blessing if he obeyed that will. It evidently dawned on the minds of some that religion was a spiritual thing, and that sacrifices were not all-important. Not all the Jews were equally devout-minded; but many like our Psalmist found in the Torah a great source of inspiration and comfort. There were no pressing dangers of idolatry to rouse the minds of enthusiasts; and the long and apparently uneventful period of subjection to the Persians left thoughtful people free in several generations to ponder these holy Scriptures, to teach them to their children, and to try to shape their own life by them. True, there were differences in the written laws, and it might not be easy to decide which was to be followed; but a class of men, called the 'Scribes,' gradually arose, whose business it was to explain and expound the 'Law' as a whole, and to make clear the special statutes to the inquirer.

Altogether a great change had come over the people, as we may realise by comparing the state of things when Josiah began his reign in 640 with that which existed three hundred years later. A deeper sense of personal religion had come. Men were learning the worth of prayer. The violent

passions and divisions of the earlier period had given way to a steady discipline under universally recognised rules. There were troubles enough, no doubt, to disturb the minds of those who thus fed their piety on the Torah; but at this period the people were much less disposed than formerly to excite each other with feverish prophecies of sudden change in the fortunes of Judah, either for the better or the worse. The strenuous days of the great prophets had ceased; a race of sage and careful teachers had begun, and the basis of their teaching was the Law. It told the worshipper how he must approach the holy Yāhveh. It also told the man going about his ordinary duties how he should behave, with what truth, kindness, honesty, and industry. There was nothing just like it in all the range of the ancient world. No wonder a little pride began to be shown by the Jew in being the possessor of such a store of wisdom!

It has been thought that during this 'Persian period' the Jews learned not a little from their political masters, who also had a religion of their own. One feature of the Persian religion was the belief that the Good Power of the Universe was engaged in a long struggle with an Evil Power; and around each there was thought to be a host of lesser beings—'angels' or 'messengers'—who came to do their lord's bidding amongst men. It is certain that after their contact with the Persians, the Jews showed in their writings that something of this kind

had taken hold of their imaginations; and we all know that at the time when Jesus lived there was a strong belief in the existence of 'angels' and 'devils.' No doubt, one nation influenced another then as it does now; but we must remember that the Jews held very firmly to their own Scriptures, and thus kept as close as possible to the leading ideas of their forefathers.

The 'Persian period' at last came to a close. Those Greeks who more than a century and a half before had stopped the victorious career of Xerxes had (as was mentioned in the last lesson) made great advances in civilization. One of the Greek states, Macedonia, at last sent forth a wonderful young man, named Alexander the Great, who subdued all the other Greeks, both in Europe and Asia Minor, and led a mighty army far across Asia to India itself. Egypt fell under his sway, as well as the Persian home-land; and of course little Palestine was included in his territories. Thus another great change began for the Jews; but we must speak about that in the next lesson.

Date: The 'Pentateuch,' arranged 400 B.C. Rise of Alexander of Macedonia, 336 B.C. Death of Alexander, 323 B.C.

Questions.

1. What are the three divisions in the Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament)?
2. What is the Torah; and when was it finally arranged?
3. Do you know anything of the

different writings that were combined to make the Torah?

4. What lessons may we learn from it?

XI.—The Coming of the Greeks.

READING.

And it came to pass, after that Alexander the Macedonian, the son of Philip, who came out of the land of Chittim, and smote Darius, king of the Persians and Medes,—it came to pass, after he had smitten him, that he reigned in his stead, in former time, over the *Greek Empire*. And he fought many battles, and won many strongholds, and slew the kings of the earth, and took spoils of a multitude of nations. And the earth was quiet before him, and he was exalted, and his heart was lifted up, and he gathered together an exceeding strong host, and ruled over countries and nations and principalities, and they became tributary unto him.

And after these things he fell sick, and perceived that he should die. And he called his servants, which were honourable, which had been brought up with him from his youth, and he divided unto them his kingdom, while he was yet alive. And Alexander reigned twelve years, and he died. And his servants bare rule, each one in his place. And they did all put diadems upon themselves after that he was dead, and so did their sons after them many years: and they multiplied evils in the earth.—*1 Maccabees* i. 1-9.

This reading is taken from a book which, with others, used to be bound up with the Bible, but which is now generally published with them in a volume called 'The Apocrypha.' Without doubt there are many fictitious things in this 'Apocrypha,' but the selection given above is a pretty fair

summary of the career of Alexander the Great, who brought about the next great change in Jewish history. He did not come like Nebuchadrezzar to carry the Jews into captivity, nor like Cyrus did he send a number of them back to the land of their fathers. He did not rule long over them himself; but he broke up the old Persian empire entirely, and the long and peaceful period of Jewish history was succeeded by one of change and anxiety.

It will be a convenient thing if we remember that Alexander the Great comes just midway in the span of years between Josiah and Jesus. And we may without much error use his date as dividing between two great divisions of the story of the Jews, so far as it comes before us in these lessons. From Josiah to Alexander we may regard the Jews as struggling not only for national existence, but still more to fix the type of their religion. In the last lesson we saw that with the compilation of the Law—their great religious book—there was rendered possible the steady growth of personal religion fed upon its teachings; we also saw in the preceding lesson that the Temple and the High-Priesthood had become fixed elements in the public religious life. Both in regard to public and personal religion a principle of stability was thus found. Judah might have no king of its own; but it now had a definite religion, and one of which its devotees were proud and tenacious.

From the time of Alexander onwards the struggle assumes a different

character. The question that will now arise is whether the Jews will be able to preserve their religion from decay arising within the nation or from corruption introduced from without. We shall see that the 'Coming of the Greeks' was a matter affecting this problem in a peculiar way.

The writer of *I. Maccabees* is mistaken in thinking that Alexander before he died peacefully divided his great empire, which included all the lands which we have heard of in these lessons—from Persia to Egypt and northward across Asia Minor to Greece. The fact is that his successors, or 'Diadochi' as the Greeks called them, only managed to part the vast territories among themselves after a severe struggle; and fighting went on about it for some forty or fifty years after Alexander's death in 323. Whether Alexander himself ever visited Jerusalem, as stories say, we cannot be sure; but apparently he did not greatly injure it, and the stories say he showed some favour to its people. It seems undoubted, however, that the Greekish commanders who parted the empire amongst themselves took some pains to secure the friendship of the Jews who settled in their dominions; for from this time onwards we hear more and more about such foreign settlements.

In the case of the new ruler of Egypt, indeed, the Jews did not find at first any kindly treatment. On the contrary, this man, Ptolemy, who founded a celebrated race of kings,

made it a part of his first business to attack Jerusalem (which had remained loyal to the appointed Satrap of Syria), and carried off a large number of captives. Very soon a strong rival prince, Antigonus by name, who ruled over Asia Minor and aimed at universal power, made a raid on Palestine and mastered it. A year or so after the Egyptian drove his forces away, but Antigonus returned to the attack and again held the country for nine or ten years. But finally Antigonus was killed at the battle of Ipsus 301 B.C., and Ptolemy was again master of Palestine and the neighbouring territory. But two other princes, Demetrius and Seleucus, seized the land in turn, and it was not till 280 B.C. that the Egyptian monarch held undisputed sway over it.

During this time of conflict the Jews had to endure as patiently as they could, and hope for better times. No great prophet arose to encourage them to take sides with one or other of the rival princes. If their hopes of a Messiah were again kindled, it was only to find expression in new psalms, some of which we appear to have in the Bible collection. In fact, all the national strength seems to have gone at this time in the direction of religious culture. Individuals may have shown other dispositions, but as a whole the people's highest aim centred in the Temple and the Law. Their one important man of the time was Onias I., the High-Priest. It is noteworthy that when Ptolemy attacked

Jerusalem it fell an easy prey to him through the scrupulous observance of the Sabbath, on which day the Jews refused to fight. In former generations the prophets had severely blamed the people for not keeping the Sabbath with sufficient strictness; the Law had such a hold of them now that they would not break it even to keep an enemy out of their city.

But, by degrees, the settlers in foreign countries naturally got somewhat out of touch with this strict practice. Those who were taken to Egypt by Ptolemy were afterwards much favoured by him, and there soon sprang up a good deal of intercourse between them and the cultivated Greek officers and others who were the rulers in that country. Seleucus, the Syrian ruler, whom we named above, and who raised the fine city of Antioch as his capital, also induced many Jews to settle there, and gave them privileges to secure the goodwill. Others migrated to different cities in Asia Minor. Thus a considerable number of Jews were closely surrounded by the influences of foreign habits and notions. The Greeks had developed a noble literature, and they had thought much on the problems of life and religion. Wherever they went they took seed-thoughts with them; they also carried with them a certain light-heartedness and fondness for beauty and pleasure which contrasted with the sternness of the Jewish teaching. It was from this side that the Jews were now threatened, more than from the side of political

government. They might pay tribute to a foreign ruler and yet keep themselves aloof from Gentile practices which were seen only at a distance. But it was a harder thing to keep the Greek ideas and fashions, which spread everywhere, from fascinating their sons and daughters. We shall see that this struggle became as severe as any that the nation had ever endured.

Dates: Ptolemy takes captives to Egypt (Jerusalem taken on Sabbath), 320 B.C. Seleucus, king of Syria, 312-280 B.C. (founds Antioch, and settles Jews there). Ptolemy II. seizes Palestine 280 B.C.

Questions.

1. Who broke up the Persian Empire?
2. How long did Alexander the Great live after Josiah? How long before Jesus?
3. Who was the Egyptian ruler who seized Palestine after Alexander's death?
4. Where did foreign Jewish settlement spring up?

XII.—The Law translated into Greek.

READING. *Isaiah* xxvi. 1-15.

In this passage which, although bound up among the writings of the earlier *Isaiah*, appears to be a piece composed in the time of Alexander the Great, we see the hope expressed that Yahveh will take away 'the veil that is spread over all nations'; and it

clearly indicated that this blessing is to come from the holy mountain of the Temple. In other words, the pious Jew desires to see the blessings of a pure and uplifting faith in the one and only God, who is a God at once merciful and righteous, extended to all mankind. It was not always the case that Jews expressed these generous desires, and especially in times of oppression it was more natural for them to think of vengeance than of benediction. But it is not difficult to believe that, as here and there the groups of Jewish worshippers gathered together to observe the Sabbath, though far from their native land, the minds of the more generous and thoughtful turned with sympathy and yearning towards men and women around them, and wished that these also might be led to share the blessings of a life obedient to Yahveh's holy Law.

It was also inevitable that, as the older generation of settlers died and younger generations arose, there would be a growing difficulty as to the language in which the Scriptures were written. Indeed, before the time of Alexander, the ancient Hebrew of the prophets had become old-fashioned, and some explanations had to be given of the words which had fallen out of disuse. With the coming of the Greeks, and the prevalence of their methods of government, trade, and education, a further stock of new words came into the language; one of them—'Synagogue,' or meeting-

place—being soon amongst the most familiar on Jewish lips. What more natural, then, than that the Jews should begin to think of forming a translation of their Law into that language, Greek, which was the prevailing speech of the rulers at least of the different nationalities brought into close contact by Alexander and his successors? Probably the idea had to 'simmer' in people's minds some time before anything was done in this direction, for the Jews were coming to guard their Scriptures very jealously, and to attach importance to every word and letter of the old commandments.

At last, apparently soon after Ptolemy II. began his long and prosperous reign, during which the Jews advanced considerably in wealth and importance, a translation was actually begun. In after times a fanciful story was invented, which said that seventy (or seventy-two) translators, officially appointed, performed this task amid certain wonderful circumstances which we need not trouble to repeat. It is not at all unlikely that pains were taken to secure a faithful translation and to see that foreign residents got correct copies; but the translation was a work of time, and the whole Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) could not be translated as yet, for the very good reason that some of it had still to be written!

Yes; we have safe grounds for believing that several books in the Old Testament are of later date than the beginning even of the 'Greek Period,'

of which we are now speaking. The book of 'Daniel,' for example, owes its origin to a fierce struggle which did not arise till 175 B.C.—long after the dates we have yet reached. There are other books which had apparently not been written much, if any earlier than 278, the year when the translation of the Seventy—or 'Septuagint,' as it is called, was, according to tradition, begun.

If we look very briefly at two of these later books we may see that, as has been said, individuals at least felt the pressure of new ideas or were drawn to discuss old problems in new ways. Of the latter kind is the book of 'Job.' It is based on a story of a good man who suffered the heaviest calamities; and it consists of a discussion, carried on by imaginary persons, as to the reason why he was so afflicted. The traditional Jewish notion was that it was only because of a man's wickedness that he suffered. The earlier prophets, Jeremiah and the second Isaiah, had strongly opposed that view and suggested other reasons. But the idea evidently persisted; we meet it in the Gospels, written long after this time. The writer of 'Job' holds with the old prophets that it is not true that people—or nations, for evidently the story has reference to the long subjection and troubles of the Jews—suffer only because they themselves have been wicked. But the only solution of the difficulty he has to offer seems to be that God is so great that His ways are not to be discussed—and this is, of course, no solution. The man

who felt like that had evidently got a very long way from the intense spiritual consciousness of the prophets, and missed the tone of the tender-hearted 'sweet singers of Israel,' whose Psalms are amongst our choicest treasures.

Another writer, and one who seems to have come into close touch with foreign thought, was the author of 'Ecclesiastes,' which is one of the least satisfactory books in the Bible. It contains many sayings, indeed, which are wise and wholesome; but they are embedded amid so much that is bitter, that it has been confidently concluded that the original work was 'improved' by some later writer who did not like to see it going about amongst readers as it was. The truth is that, whoever he was, the author had no belief in anything much higher than pitiless fate. He was weary of hopes ever-baffled, and fine thoughts about Yahveh that never led to much national or personal benefit. Things had gone on and would go on pretty much in a circle. History would repeat itself; why vex oneself one way or the other? Of course it would not pay to break laws and get disliked; at the same time it was little use to cherish enthusiasm. Altogether, the book was a sad and dreary bit of writing; but no doubt it was sincere, and its very sincerity shows how deeply the miseries and perplexities of life weighed upon the minds of some to whom no stately ritual at the Temple, and no venerated Torah, could bring real comfort.

This lesson has been chiefly about 'books,' and we cannot forget that books have been and are amongst the most powerful things in the world. But we must remember, all the while, that the Jews were in many respects like other people. Not all of them were notable for piety, though religious observances might be practically universal. Not all of them were deeply thoughtful. They sorrowed or joyed with the passing hours; they had to face difficulties and temptations, engaging in their work and living their lives just as we do, with every variety of disposition. While some were poor and lowly others rose in wealth and dignity. One of the latter has left an evil name behind; notwithstanding the commercial prosperity which came about largely through his efforts. His name was Joseph, the son of Tobias, and he acted as tax-gatherer in Palestine for the Egyptian king during the later years of the third century B.C. The Eastern system was, and still is, to sell the collection of taxes to some individual who engages to get a fixed sum for the monarch, and pays himself by screwing as much more as he can out of the tax-payers. It was just this kind of thing that made the name of 'publican' hated in Gospel times. This Joseph had several sons, and it was very much through them that the next great trouble fell on the Jews.

Dates: The Syrian King, Antiochus III., seizes Palestine, 218 B.C. Being defeated by Ptolemy V., he retires, but

renews the attack, 202 B.C. Palestine finally under the Syrian power, 197 B.C.

Questions.

1. Why, do you think, did the Jews make a Greek translation of their Law?
2. What is the name given to the Greek Old Testament? When was it begun?
3. What is the subject discussed in the Book of Job?
4. Do you know any great sayings from the Book of Ecclesiastes?
5. What Jew grew rich as a tax-gatherer for the Egyptian King?

XIII.—Antiochus IV. and the Maccabees.

READING. *Daniel* viii. 1-14.

This is a very remarkable 'vision,' but with the aid of the latter part of the chapter we can make something out of it.

We must dismiss from our minds the supposition that this chapter contains a 'prophecy' composed in the old Babylonian times. The introductory verses are only a poetical setting for the sketch that follows, and that sketch is one of the history of that part of the world since the rise of Persia. The 'ram with two horns' stand for the Power of the Medes and Persians, the latter being the dominant element. Its empire spread 'westward, northward, and southward,' as our map will show. Then comes the Greek Power—the 'he-goat' of the vision—

with Alexander as its 'notable horn.' This 'horn,' having conquered everywhere, is 'broken.' The great king dies, and 'four notables,' the Successors of Alexander, arise in as many divisions of the Empire. From one of these, the house of Seleucus, arises a 'little horn' that becomes 'great,' especially toward the south and east and 'toward the glorious land.'

This 'little horn' that became 'great' was evidently a bitter enemy of the Jews. This writer speaks of him as a profaner of the sanctuary, and a bringer of desolation, the end of which had not been reached by the time of writing. Who was he?

We have a great deal of interesting matter about him, and about his times, in the writings of Josephus and in the Apocryphal books called 'The Maccabees.' He was a terrible figure in this later Jewish history; but he was the cause of a remarkable outburst of life which contrasts with the somewhat slumbrous condition of the previous period.

We remember the name of Seleucus, the Syrian king, who built Antioch and favoured the Jews who settled there. His descendants included some vigorous monarchs, who by degrees managed to extend their borders; and Palestine, after conflicts renewed again and again with Egypt, at last fell under their sovereignty. Thus a fresh period began—the Syrian period. Antiochus III., who was king at this time, was mild and beneficent towards the Jews; and his son, Seleucus

IV., continued the same policy. Unfortunately, however, there was now a greater political Power in the world than Syria—a Power which came more and more into contact with the Jews till it finally crushed their nation out of existence. This Power was *Rome*, a republic which had grown from small beginnings till by this time it was aiming at a complete mastery of the countries bordering the Mediterranean.

Antiochus III. had been obliged to promise to pay tribute to the Romans, and when he died they held his son Antiochus as a hostage at Rome, till Seleucus, who became king, should send the money. Now it was just at this time, we hear, that a Jew named Simon, who had quarrelled with the High-Priest Onias III., went to the Syrian officer and told him that there was a vast heap of treasure at the Temple; and, of course, he at once wanted this for the tribute to Rome. A general was sent to get it, but for some reason failed.

Seleucus died in 175 B.C.; and now far more serious troubles beset the Jews. A considerable number had by this time so completely adopted the Greek fashions that they wished to bring about an entire change in the social and religious life of their people. They sought the aid of the Syrian king, Antiochus IV., who succeeded his brother; and this monarch was evidently heart and soul with them. He deposed Onias from the High-Priesthood, and put his brother Joshua in his place, changing his

name to the Greek 'Jason,' as a token of the new style of things. This Jason was at the head of the Greekish (or 'Hellenic') party in the city. He was soon deposed in turn, for a brother of that traitor Simon who told about the Temple treasure offered the Syrians a huge sum for the appointment as High-Priest, and, obtaining that office, himself robbed the Temple and killed poor Onias. This bad man's name was Menelaus—another Greek name, observe. Then Jason tried to win the prize again, and while Antiochus was on a conquering expedition to Egypt, he succeeded for a time; but Antiochus, coming back again in triumph, took severe vengeance on Jerusalem and plundered the Temple. This was in 169 B.C.

And this was only the beginning of troubles. The next year he set about destroying all that was peculiar in the Jewish religion, for he clearly saw that so long as they held by it they would not be an easy people to bend to his will. His general took the city (on the Sabbath), put a Syrian garrison in it, and issued commands against the worship of Yahveh. The Temple was dedicated to Zeus, the Greek supreme deity. The people were forbidden to observe the Sabbath or other holy-days prescribed by the Law, and their rules as to food, etc., were to be broken. Their Scriptures were collected and burnt, and no one was to keep a copy on pain of death. All this was fiercely opposed by the faithful Jews, and the struggle lasted a

long while, during which the city was the scene of terrible doings. It was in 168—the Jews bitterly noted the very day—when sacrifices were offered on the heathen altar in the Temple. This was to the pious Jews, as we can well understand, the most awful thing that could happen. Many died rather than endure that sight. Others, to their shame, took sides with the Syrians and received gifts and honours from them.

But the year of such desolation saw a spark of hope arise. An old priest named Mattathias, with his five sons, raised the standard of rebellion. In their extremity they resolved to fight even on the Sabbath, and no longer be at their enemy's mercy on that day. The father died in 166, but the sons carried on the heroic contest. One of them, *Judas Maccabeus*, surpassed his brothers in martial skill, rallied the faithful to his standard, and defeated the Syrians in battle after battle. With immense jubilation he was able at last to re-enter Jerusalem as the deliverer of his people, and the champion of their holy religion. The Syrian garrison still held their fortress in the city; but Judas and his victorious friends lost no time in restoring the pure worship of Yahveh in the Temple, and a solemn service of dedication was held in 165, just three years to the day after the sacrifices had been stopped by Antiochus. The Syrian king died the next year, and his son Antiochus V. sent a huge army to the relief of the Syrian garrison in Jeru-

salem. No doubt this army would have crushed Judas and his party altogether; but events elsewhere made the Syrians anxious to settle affairs in Judea as soon as possible, and so they agreed to let the Jews worship freely in their own fashion, and peace was made.

'Peace'—yes; but a very brief and imperfect peace, as we shall see. But here let us pause and consider the state in which the Jewish people found themselves in that year 163 B.C. After a long, long time of nearly three centuries since Ezra's days, a time of steady settling down into a fixed order of worship, and ever-increasing attachment to their Scriptures on the part of the most devout, they had only just saved their religion from utter destruction. And a considerable number of them were quite ready to give up all that was distinctively Jewish and to become blended with the population around them. No doubt these included some who wished for a union with all that was best in the Greek culture; but it is clear that there were many who had lost all real interest in religion. They wanted to get on in the world, to enjoy all they could, and not to be 'righteous overmuch,' as Ecclesiastes would say. On the other hand, there were the 'pious,' who clung passionately to the old ways, and looked upon the heathen with increasing contempt. But the people they most hated were those who were nearest to being Jews, but were still only 'Samaritans' or 'Philistines'—

the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus, in the Apocrypha, says (chap. i. 25-26): 'With two nations is my soul vexed; and the third is no nation: they that sit upon the mountain of Samaria, and the Philistines, and the foolish people that dwelleth in Sichem.' This writer, Jesus son of Sirach, appears to have belonged to this period. It was a sad problem to be solved. Would the friends of 'Hellenism' win, or those of strict 'Judaism'? If the former, would any religion worth the name survive? If the latter, would the religion that survived be a wise and generous one, or a narrow and bigoted one?

We shall see.

Dates: Antiochus IV. (called 'Epiphanes') king, 175 B.C. He abolishes the worship of Yahveh, and sets up an altar to Zeus in the Temple, 168 B.C. Judas Maccabeus's revolt, 168-163 B.C. The sacrifices restored and re-dedication of the Temple, 165 B.C. Death of Antiochus IV., 164 B.C. Syrians permit freedom of worship again, 163 B.C.

Questions.

1. Who was the king who tried to destroy the religion of the Jews? When did he reign?
2. What two parties were there in Jerusalem?
3. What was the worst calamity that befell the faithful Jews? When did it occur?
4. Who became champion of the worship of Yahveh? When was the Temple re-dedicated?

XIV.—The Maccabean Princes.

READING. *I. Maccabees* viii. 1-4, 13-16.

And Judas heard of the fame of the *Romans*, that they are valiant men, and have pleasure in all that join themselves unto them, and make amity with all such as come unto them, and that they are valiant men. And they told him of their wars and exploits which they do among the Gauls, and how that they conquered them and brought them under tribute; and what things they did in the land of Spain, that they might become masters of the mines of silver and gold which were there; and how that by their policy and persistence they conquered all the place (and the place was exceeding far from them), and the kings that came against them from the uttermost parts of the earth, until they had discomfited them, and smitten them very sore; and how the rest give them tribute year by year. . . .

Moreover, whomsoever they will to succour and to make kings these they do make kings; and whomsoever they will do they depose; and they are exalted exceedingly; and for all this none of them did ever put on a diadem, neither did they clothe themselves with purple, to be magnified thereby; and how they had made for themselves a senate house, and day by day three hundred and twenty men sat in council, consulting always for the people, to the end that they might be well-ordered; and how they commit their government to one man year by year, that he should rule over them, and be lord over all their country, and all are obedient to that one, and there is neither envy nor emulation among them.

Here we have a picture, drawn by a later hand, of what was in the mind of Judas Maccabeus when in the year 161 B.C. he resolved to ask the Romans to help him against the Syrians. The chapter goes on to say a good deal

about the treaty that he made against this great Power, which we shall see taking a great part in the fortunes of the Jews; but, in fact, nothing came of it at present, and Judas had to fight his battles unaided by them. For the fighting was by no means ended. The Syrians appointed as High-Priest one Alcimus, who was the leader of the 'Hellenist' party, and who was charged with idolatrous practices by the pious Jews. Thereupon Judas took to arms again and overcame the Syrian general who marched to oppose him. The brave Judas, however, was himself killed in battle against another general, and his brother Jonathan continued the struggle with varying fortune. A good deal of strife was going on between rival Syrian princes, and, amongst it all, Jonathan was able to hold up the banner of the pious Jews for a good while, and to keep himself at the head of affairs on that side. He in his turn was killed in 142 B.C., and then the last surviving brother of the Maccabean family, Simon, after renewing the alliance with the Romans, made peace with the Syrian prince Demetrius, and so successfully ordered things in the city and district that the people gratefully proclaimed him not only High-Priest but Prince, the succession to these offices being assigned to his children.

Thus began, for the first time since the death of Josiah's son Zedekiah, more than four hundred years before, a new race of Jewish princes!

Simon himself did not wear the

honour long; he, like his brothers, died from violence, and left the crown and High-Priesthood to his son Joannan, or John, who had already shown himself a valiant soldier. John 'Hyrcanus,' as he was called, began his reign in the year 135 B.C., and for about thirty years he maintained his position vigorously, extending his dominions till they included almost all the territory once ruled by David and Solomon. Amongst other exploits he made a successful war on the 'Samaritans,' whose city and temple he destroyed. We can readily imagine the bitter feelings which this act brought about.

Another feature in his reign was a quarrel with the 'Pharisees,' a party whose name is so often found in the Gospels. They were the stricter party, much devoted to the study and practice of the ancient Law. The 'Sadducees,' who also rose into prominence at this time, were chiefly the aristocrats of Jewish society; they disliked to be bound by every jot and tittle of the old Law, and cultivated friendship with the non-Jewish people of rank and wealth in the mingled population which now filled the land of Palestine and made it a very thriving country. As time went on, their religious differences were combined with political differences, the Pharisees being notable for their stern and even fanatical patriotism.

John Hyrcanus was on one occasion unfairly taunted by the Pharisees with not being of pure Jewish birth; and,

though as a scion of the Maccabean family he had hitherto shared in the enthusiasm of the Pharisee party, he now threw up his connection with them and favoured the Sadducees. This was an unpopular policy, for the common people respected the Pharisees for their devotion, and naturally resented the haughtiness of the aristocratic Sadducees.

When John Hyrcanus died, in 106 B.C., a year of strife ensued between the members of his family, but in 105 Alexander Jannæus became king and reigned for twenty-six years.

But before we pass into that century, at the end of which Jesus Christ was born, it will be well to consider what we have already seen in the course of our lessons, especially as regards religious changes. We began with the attempt of the reformers, under Josiah, to draw the Jewish people away from their old habits of sacrifice and worship at many different places and often in ways that were heathenish, and to settle that the one place of worship should be at Jerusalem. That was five hundred years before the time of John Hyrcanus, and all through those years we may trace the efforts of some party of reform, though the precise objects of each may differ from age to age.

After Josiah there came a relapse into the mixed way of worship, and the reformers, among whom was Jeremiah, were a small and neglected minority. But if they were defeated in their public efforts they kept on working in private, writing the story

of the past, and adding to their book of Deuteronomy. The period of the captivity saw Jeremiah's teachings collected, as those of older prophets had been, though there was still a possibility of new pieces being bound up with their collections. Ezekiel also was active as a prophet and priestly reformer, and his special point was the making of a holy city and temple for Yahveh. When the returned captives began to make a new Judah out of the ruins of the old, this ideal was kept in mind; but it was not till the time of Ezra and Nehemiah that the priestly reform was set about in earnest. From their time onward the object of the reformers was to keep Yahveh's people as strictly apart from all others as possible. The Law, compiled of several ancient writings, but specially emphasizing the separateness of the Jewish people and the modes of hallowing themselves to Yahveh, was now a finished work; and with the rise of the High-Priesthood and the study of the Law the nation became more and more a religious community, although there were still some tendencies to slacken in zeal for Yahveh.

Then came the Greek wave, and with it the danger of sweeping off some from Jewish ways of thought and worship. The struggle against this tendency did not become acute, however, for some time. The Law itself was translated into Greek, and Jewish colonies settled in different parts far from the home-land, adhering to the peculiarities of their religion, but de-

pending chiefly for religious help upon the *synagogue*, which afforded a place for common prayer, for teaching in the Law, and for reading from the Prophets. A third class of 'Writings' came also into repute, though not so valuable as the others; these 'Writings' continued to be produced right on to Maccabean times. Psalms and other short compositions were no doubt added even as late as this to the older collections; but we may regard the Old Testament literature as fairly complete, though not yet all made authoritative Scripture, before the new kingdom was established in the second century before Christ.

While the sacred literature was thus settled, the cause of reform had become rather one of conservation. There was now a strong party in favour of making changes in worship and teaching such as would have destroyed all that was most distinctive in Judaism. It was to defeat this Hellenic party that the Maccabean family had roused the people, and we have seen how successful they were.

And having secured their religion against this danger, the stricter Jews remained on guard, so to speak, against any other influence that might introduce changes. As Pharisees they grappled with the Sadducees—a poorer but more serious party against a wealthy and somewhat worldly one. The common people's respect was with them, and they magnified their office as guardians of the faith and worship. It is easy to see the dangers of their

position. By degrees they hardened into bigots, or corrupted into formalists. They held so fast to the ancient traditions that they lost sight of the essentials of true spiritual religion. They ceased, at last, to represent the side of reform, and became the bitter foes of the Greatest of Reformers.

Dates: Death of Judas Maccabeus, 161 B.C. Jonathan, his brother, leader during 161-143 B.C. Simon, another brother, hereditary prince and High-Priest, 142-135 B.C. John Hyrcanus, Simon's son, ruler 135-106 B.C.

Questions.

1. When did Judas Maccabeus die? For what was he famous?
2. Which of his brothers succeeded him as leader?
3. Who was John Hyrcanus?
4. What do you know about the Pharisees and Sadducees?

XV.—Herod and his Family.

READING. *Wisdom* vi. 1-6.

Hear, therefore, ye kings, and understand; learn, ye judges of the ends of the earth.

Give ear, ye that have dominion over much people, and make your boast in multitudes of nations.

Because your dominion was given you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High, who shall search out your works, and make inquisition of your counsels:

Because being officers of His kingdom, ye did not walk aright, neither kept ye law nor walked after the counsel of God:

Awfully and swiftly shall He come upon you; because a stern judgment befalleth them that be in high place.

For the man of low estate may be pardoned in mercy, but mighty men shall be put to the test mightily.

The Book of 'Wisdom,' from which this reading is taken, was apparently written in the century before Jesus was born—probably towards its close. It was a time when earnest men could not help crying out against the wickedness of princes. The Maccabean family—otherwise called the Hasmonæans—ended in very bad repute. Alexander Jannæus, who reigned over the Jewish kingdom between 105-79 B.C., was a cruel and powerful man who allied himself with the Sadducees; and, in spite of victories over adjoining tribes, his own people hated him. It is said that he put nearly 6,000 of them to death in revenge for an affront to him at one of the religious festivals. Towards the close of his reign he had to put down a formidable rebellion at Jerusalem. He died in 79 B.C., and his widow Salomé ruled as queen. Acting on her late husband's advice, she allied herself with the Pharisees, and brought much prosperity to the land. Unfortunately, she died in 70 B.C., and a struggle followed between her two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus.

About this time a famous Roman general was carrying on war in Asia Minor. His name was Pompey, and he is well-known as the opponent of Julius Cæsar. The rival princes sought his aid, and he favoured Hyrcanus,

made war on Jerusalem, where Aristobulus resisted him, and after profaning the Temple, in Jewish eyes, by entering the 'Holy of Holies,' where only the High-Priest might go, he reduced Judea to the size it had been before the time of the Maccabees, and took Aristobulus and his two sons as prisoners to Rome. This was in 63 B.C.

The Romans in their masterful way set about governing this new bit of territory, but it proved a very troublesome work. They permitted Hyrcanus to be High-Priest, but they divided the land into five districts, with separate governors, under Roman officers. The Jews now began the long series of struggles for freedom, which only ended in national extinction. They revolted against general Gabinius in 56 B.C., and again in 52 against the officers of Crassus, who with Pompey and Cæsar had divided the Roman Empire into shares. Crassus soon died, but Pompey and Cæsar had a fierce struggle for the mastery. In the end Pompey was killed and Julius Cæsar ruled supreme. This was in 48 B.C.

All this while a crafty man, an Idumean named Antipater, had been making himself useful to the Romans in their work in Judea; and when Julius Cæsar settled the government of the country once more, he let Hyrcanus remain High-Priest, but appointed Antipater governor of all Judea. He showed much favour to the Jews of Palestine and of Alex-

andria, in Egypt, where there was now a very rich and influential Jewish community. For a little time things were prosperous; but Cæsar was assassinated in 44 B.C., and troubles broke out anew. The Roman chiefs fell to fresh struggles for supreme power, and one of the sons of Aristobulus strove to regain the throne of his fathers in Judea. Herod, a younger son of Antipater, opposed him, and in 37 B.C. besieged Jerusalem, took it after an obstinate resistance, and had his rival killed.

The story of Herod, called Herod the Great, is a terrible one. He ruled till B.C. 4, which is the year when it is believed Jesus was born. He was clever and active, but he lived surrounded by dangers which worked him into frenzies of jealousy and cruelty. To the pious Pharisees it seemed that the days of Antiochus IV. were coming again; for Herod introduced many heathen fashions, such as public sports and theatrical displays, etc. But, after a sad period of famine and sickness, the Jews saw this Idumean actually rebuilding their Temple for them. He wanted to win their good-will, and no doubt this was the best way. The new Temple took a year and a half to build, and eight years more were required to complete the halls and courts around it. He astonished the people by the magnificence of this and other buildings which he erected in the city, and he raised marble monuments on the graves of David and Solomon. Still better, he secured from

Augustus, who was now the Emperor of Rome, the assurance of religious liberty to the Jews wherever they had synagogues in the empire. There were by this time many thousands of them in different parts; the Egyptian Jews had a temple only second in stateliness to that at Jerusalem; and at Rome itself their presence was felt not always with satisfaction, for their customs and worship, not to mention other things, made them unlike everybody else, and stirred prejudice against them.

The end of this remarkable reign was very sad. Plots and suspicions abounded, and death and imprisonment were dealt out freely. The Pharisees were among Herod's chief victims—apart from his own family; and he left orders, happily disobeyed, that all the prisoners from that party should be put to death.

On his death, the members of his family hurried to Rome to secure favour there. The Roman officers on duty in Judea had to put down one revolt after another, led by pretended 'Kings of the Jews.' In time, while Jesus was a boy, the Romans, after repeated complaints against Herod's son, Archelaus, who obtained the greatest share of his father's dominions, settled the question of government by keeping Judea and Samaria in their own hands and assigning other portions of Palestine to Philip and Antipas, two other sons of Herod. And so Jerusalem passed into the hands of Roman officers who held it from A.D. 7 to 37. They

taxed the people heavily, and treated them harshly in many ways. We may easily see how bitterly the Jews regarded them, and how bold it was of Jesus to say 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' Many were sighing for better times, for the coming of a kingdom such as their prophets had spoken of. A great 'Kingdom' was, indeed, near at hand. In the midst of their political and religious struggles a new voice was to be heard that would change the course of the history of the world.

Dates: Salomé rules, 79-70 B.C. Pompey takes Jerusalem, 63 B.C. Julius Cæsar allows the walls of Jerusalem to be rebuilt, 47 B.C. Julius Cæsar's death, 44 B.C. Herod the Great becomes king, 37 B.C. Herod the Great dies, 4 B.C. *Jesus Christ probably born in 4 B.C.* Judea a Roman province, 7 A.D.

Questions.

1. Where do we find the Book of Wisdom? What does the 'reading' quoted show?

2. What kind of princes ruled Judea in this century before the Romans took possession of it?

3. Name the Roman general who entered the 'Holy of Holies.'

4. What kind of man was Herod the Great? What did he do for the Jews?

5. Say what you know about the Government after the death of Herod.

XVI.—The New Kingdom.

READING. *Mark i. 1-15.*

We have now come to that period in the history of the Jews which is of the greatest interest to us and to all the world, for it was the time when Jesus lived and spoke and died. Many things there are to be said about him and his work which we cannot mention here; but our lessons ought to enable us to understand our Gospels better, and to feel how his teachings struck the mind of his fellow-countrymen.

It was six hundred years and more since Josiah had tried to win his people to the purer worship of Yahveh. It was more than four hundred years since Ezra and Nehemiah had rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and set on a firm foundation the religious system which lasted so long, and was held so dear. We have seen how the Jews' sacred literature—the Old Testament—was gradually formed, and how the synagogues arose for the teaching of the Law and conduct of simple worship, while at Jerusalem the stately order of sacrifice and psalm was maintained in all its splendeur. We have seen how by degrees the people became so passionately attached to these religious institutions that when, two hundred years before Christ began to teach, a foreign king tried to abolish them, they fought with desperate courage until they gained the victory.

When we read the story of Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, we see that the same attachment to the ancient

traditions and ceremonies led the Pharisees and scribes to become his bitter enemies. They had become so attached to the ancient forms that they could not receive the new spirit of religion which he brought to them.

The land seethed with political rebelliousness. It was hardly less agitated with religious strife. The parties of the Sadducees and Pharisees opposed each other as they had done during many years past, and new parties made their appearance. Some, like the *Essenes*, fled from the world into solitude or exclusive communities; others, like the *Zealots*, were anxious to see the rise of some great Messiah who would break the foreign yoke from the neck of Yahveh's people. Writings abounded—some of them are still to be found—in which a new spirit of 'prophecy' showed itself, but a prophecy which, unhappily, lacked much of the finer and nobler thought of ancient times. Men were asking,—Was not the time near when the 'day of Yahveh' would come, and His holy Law be obeyed in all the earth?

We are told that in the midst of this ferment there appeared in 'the wilderness'—near to the southern Jordan, apparently—a strangely-clad rugged figure, whose words were as stern as his figure was strange. This was John, 'the Baptist,' or 'Dipper,' who, using the bathing of the body as a symbol of the cleansing of the soul, urged men to 'change their minds' (for that is what to 'repent' means), and by a good and pure life to get ready for the

great new kingdom that was close at hand. Many heard John and accepted baptism as a sign of dedication to a better life. Amongst the rest came some 'scribes and Pharisees'; but John seems to have spoken his sternest words to them, and to have looked upon them as the worst foes of true religion. They had, in too many cases, paid so much attention to the outward rules of the Law as to have forgotten the inward spirit without which all ceremonials, however pretty, however solemn, are deadly to the soul.

And then came Jesus, the son of a carpenter at Nazareth in Galilee, from the midst of a population so mixed that the Jerusalem Jews thought no good could come out of it. He also was baptized, and after a short time, in which John was arrested by one of Herod's sons and put into prison, Jesus began to speak to the people, using much the same words at first as John had done—'Change your minds, the Kingdom of Heaven has come nigh.' We learn from the Gospels that he looked upon this Kingdom as the life of goodness and fellowship with the Heavenly Father—for so he named God. He did not go away from men's ordinary life into the wilderness, but joined with them in their homes, and spoke his best thoughts to poor or rich, young or old, 'publican' (*i.e.*, tax-gatherer) or Pharisee, just as the case might be.

At first it seemed as if he would carry the host of his hearers away from all their old and narrow views of

religion into this strangely new and tender thought of God, and of the spiritual 'Kingdom of Heaven.' The poor found him to be no proud Sadducee, no self-righteous Pharisee, but a friend to all—to those who were striving to be pure in heart and to live a life of brotherly love and peace with all men, and to those who had been sadly and shamefully neglectful of these things, but who heard from him a welcome to a Love that knows all and forgives all when we turn to the right and love it.

But, as we know, there were many kinds of people to whom this holy 'Gospel' was not acceptable. It was too searching; it called for self-sacrifice; it held out no promises of worldly wealth and supremacy either to individuals or to the nation of the Jews; it made light of long-cherished customs, and if people acted on it everywhere there would come an end to priests and sacrifices and temple-ritual and all the pomp of the old system which men had learned to regard as ordained of God Himself. Thus Jesus found enemies as well as friends; and in the course of a short time his enemies proved too strong for him. As John the Baptist was silenced by death, so was Jesus. We know the story of his trial and crucifixion; we know, also—and we are glad in the knowledge—that though his friends were at first afraid to speak about him in public, they gathered courage at last, and before very long a new party had arisen in Judea. They called themselves the 'disciples' of

Jesus, or 'the brethren'; but as they entered into the spirit of the Gospel of 'the Kingdom,' they boldly claimed that Jesus himself was the true 'Christ,' the real 'Messiah,' the 'Anointed One' that should bring that Kingdom of God on earth; and so they were known as 'Christians,' a name which has lived ever since.

It is now 1,900 years since the childhood of Jesus, 'the Christ' of the new and better kingdom—the Son of Man who was so truly the Son of God; and now Christianity is a vast system of religious life and teaching, with many different sections, among them that to which our school belongs. And we also look back with wonder and love to that dear Teacher, who loved little children and young people, and made a religion possible where they might live sweetly natural lives with perfect trust in God as the 'Heavenly Father.' How different our land is to-day from the unhappy struggling Judea of the time of Jesus! How different that Judea was from the Judah of the time of Josiah! So the world changes. The new ideas of Josiah's time became the old ideas of the returning captives. Their new Temple became the old sanctuary for which the Maccabees fought and died. The splendid buildings erected by Herod were overturned in the ruin of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D., and the old city of the time of Jesus has been renewed and has grown old again and again.

So one generation comes up like leaves on the trees, and falls as they

do in autumn. But, like the wise and devout men of Judah who trusted in God, we can sing of something that lasts through all changes—'For His mercy endureth for ever!' It may be hard for us sometimes to see it, as it was for the poor Jews, so often persecuted and downtrodden,—as it was for the disciples of Jesus when they saw their Master put to death. But from him they learned the lesson that has been repeated again and again by the best and holiest men, that God's 'Kingdom' is 'not of this world'; that 'a man's life consists not in the abundance of things that he possesseth'; that earthly prosperity or adversity is not God's final object with His children, but it is the true heart, the lowly loving spirit that through all things trusts in the Heavenly Father and does His will, and surrenders itself to Him without a fear or a murmur, in life and in death.

Dates: Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea, 25-36 A.D. Jesus crucified, probably in 27 A.D. Jerusalem taken by Titus, the Roman general, and destroyed, 70 A.D.

Questions.

1. How long was it from the time of Josiah to that of Jesus?
2. What were the conditions of the people in the time of Jesus, politically, and as regards religion?
3. Who was John the Baptist, and what did he preach?
4. What kind of 'Kingdom' did Jesus speak of? Who may belong to it?

'Courage.'

A MESSAGE FOR THE NEW YEAR.

*Wait on the Lord. Be of good courage;
and He will strengthen thy heart.*

Psalm xxvii, 14.



THE word 'courage' is connected with a Latin word that means 'heart.' Hence our word 'heartily,' and the phrases 'Put your heart into it' and 'Face it with a brave heart,' all suggest courage.

It is a noble word and a noble quality, and few things can be done without it: but it does not point to a smooth path and an easy task, though it brings great peace and steadfast joy.

There are many ways of shewing courage. I have heard of boys who were branded as cowards because they refused to fight, or to do other degrading but popular things: but it often requires far more courage to say 'no' than to give in to clamour,—certainly far more courage of a nobler kind. True courage can be shewn in facing opposition; in grappling with something that threatens danger to one's self but brings safety to another; in resisting the temptation to flinch from work or from some disagreeable duty; in bearing pain without making a fuss; in encountering poverty if necessary; in standing up for one's own conscience and brains, against custom and passion and the cries of the majority.

There are many great encourage-

ments in the path of courage, such as these:—

Courage finds out the truth about things. Fear hesitates, doubts, shrinks, consults the common opinion, lags behind; but courage enjoys adventure, and rejoices in discovery. It even enjoys the journey and the toil: so, of course, it is very much more likely to find out the truth about anything than the timidity that plans for safety and stays at home; and, as a matter of fact, we know that the leaders of the world, who are always its discoverers, have always been men and women who conquered fear.

Courage brings good cheer. Even though it does not win the victory, it helps the vanquished to bear defeat, and nerves him with resolution and hope for another day. It makes one independent of praise and blame, though much may be learnt from both. It enables one to be solitary. It 'gives songs in the night.'

Courage wins. That is so everywhere. They say that half the battle in learning to swim is getting rid of fear, and that the best help in an examination is cheerful courage. It gives you possession of yourself: it makes you master of what you have and what you know: it makes you resolute and confident: it makes you tough and persevering: it keeps you from being cast down. And all that helps to win.

Courage can be cultivated. There is nothing mysterious about courage. It is all natural. Some, of course, have

more of it than others,—by birth, by breeding, by temperament and by habit—but all may increase it. It can be grown or developed just as a muscle can be, or the breathing capacity, or the ability to bear cold. The very worst thing for a timid person to do is to give in to timidity. The most necessary thing is to watch timidity, to correct it and put it into training just as the athlete is put into training for the development of power.

Courage ever tends to multiply itself. The flinching of one period may become the fast-standing of another. It is easier to be brave at the second time of trial than at the first. And here the promise is seen to be wonderfully true; ‘And He will strengthen thy heart.’ That is a promise dependent upon courage, for it says, ‘Be of good courage and (then) He will strengthen thy heart’; but if there is no courage there can be no strengthening. It is the courage itself that makes strong: for so God always works, through the steadfast laws of life.

Ah me! we all need it, young and old. It is a wonderful and blessed thing to be alive; but life is often a sore burden because of the vexations and disappointments it brings. It will baffle and beat you if you let it: but if you make a stand, and plant yourself in your place like the oak, and front the toughening winds of God, He will smile in your face and make you strong.

JOHN PAGE HOPPS.

Parental Help in Religious Training.

I.—Introduction.



WHEN I was asked if I would write some words on the need of *parental* help for children with regard to religious principles, my first impulse was to decline, because of the many difficulties I had met with in formulating my own thoughts on this subject. But afterwards it occurred to me that perhaps these same difficulties beset most parents, and that if the conclusions I have come to can be of any use to others, then the expression of them will only be a labour of love.

It has struck me many times that there is a great want of definite religious teaching, chiefly, I think, among the children of Unitarians and those of parents belonging to the average Church of England, but not the Evangelicals or the advanced High Church. The parents of these two branches and of other sects seem to take far more pains in personally teaching their own children, and all honour to them for so doing, whether the creed they profess be a broad or a narrow one.

I believe the reason for parents not teaching their own children arises from one of two causes: either that they have no real faith that they desire to pass on to their children, or that they are afraid of betraying their

own ignorance of the religion they stand witness for to outward appearance. Children are no respecters of person, and the harm done is incalculable when they bring their most natural questions concerning the Creator to those who should stand in place of the Deity to them, and are told that they 'cannot understand' such things now, or else see only too plainly that father or mother does not know how to reply. *Children who ask questions earnestly have every right to be answered in earnest.*

Surely there is something wrong when a child asks someone, not his own parents, to explain a thought that puzzles him; or is it that the faiths called so beautiful and simple are still not simple enough to be understood in childhood? I would rather have a child come to me, as several have done, saying that mother does not know how to explain what he wants to understand, than let him find that his school-fellows and most of the people he comes across get on quite well, apparently, without troubling themselves about religion more than by going to some place of worship on Sundays,—and then, as the parable quaintly puts it: 'Cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.'

In *Deuteronomy* vi. verse 7, the Jewish parent—and remember that here it always means the father—is told that the two great commandments 'shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto

thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.' And in verse 20, 'When thy son asketh thee in time to come what meaneth the testimonies which the Lord our God hath commanded you?' the father is to recall the history of the Israelites to his children, and to remind them of all that had been done for them, 'Lest thou forget the Lord.'

This is a pleasure-seeking age, and in our happy homes do we not need the solemn reminder too, 'Lest we forget the Lord?'. I would put it most seriously to both parents: Is it right to expect the mother only to teach her children that which ought to be a light unto their paths all through their lives, and should not both fathers and mothers consider it to be a sacred duty to share this great responsibility?

In the two following papers will be found the outlines of two lessons that have taken me years to think out, and as many more to teach; for they have not been given at any set time, but whenever the opportunity seemed to lend itself, just as the Jewish parent was advised to do in by-gone days.

With regard to special teaching, most young children like learning hymns, and I would submit that these should never be learnt and corrected as mere recitation, and I should let a child choose his own hymns as far

as possible. They nearly always choose those that appeal to their vivid imaginations, and a child that grows up without knowing any hymns is to be pitied.

It is so easy now to teach the Old Testament stories with such a help as the 'Book of Beginnings'; but I have always had to leave out the excellent teaching of the foot-notes, for my audience liked the narrative, and would not listen to the moral! For older children studies of the Psalms and Parables may be suggested, and Jewish history as told in the Old Testament, with the help of modern discoveries; but we still want a 'Life of Christ,' unless parents can use and enrich one of the Gospels—St. Mark, for instance—for themselves. Renan's 'Life of Jesus' has always been a great help to me.

Prayer is too individual an attitude of mind for me to wish to say much about it here. I have heard children gabble words of which they did not understand one-tenth, and I know many who do not know what prayer is; but where a simple prayer is said reverently and with understanding, it surely enriches a life that would be the poorer without it.

Between the parent, who feels that prayer is a meeting of spirit with spirit, and the child who loves the parent he hath seen better than an unknown Being, there is an immeasurable distance; but it is fast diminishing when a child has learnt to ask Our Father's blessing on

'another blue day,' and to feel when he lies down at night that he is surrounded by a Great Love, which he knows is great because it has already given him father and mother and home.

Surely it should be our duty and pleasure to give this teaching to our little ones, and to feel that though at any moment we may be called away from them,—we have done our best to give them a lamp unto their feet, and that our Father will say to us of the treasures committed to our charge:—'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'

There is a teaching that comes under the heading of neither hymns, nor Scripture learning, nor prayer; but it is the teaching that comes from the heart of a parent who has learnt to see God in everything, and who loses no opportunity of drawing a child's attention to the infinite marvels of the Universe. A child who has been taught from babyhood to look upon all the beauties of Nature as the outward manifestation of an unseen Presence, and who knows that though he can take away life very easily there is only One who can give it,—that child needs but little direct teaching compared with another whose parents are—shall we say too busy to tell him a little about the wonderful world he lives in?

This ought to be the teaching that comes first. Children cannot understand abstract ideas; but they can very well grasp the thought of first,

the Giver of Life, and then the Giver of all good things.

A religion that is only spoken of on Sundays, and called 'Divinity' at school, will not have much effect on the daily life when childhood has once been left behind. I believe most parents share a deep longing to give their young sons and daughters some guiding thought that shall help them in the trials and temptations that must come to all of us, and I would say to all parents:—Let your child learn from your own daily life that we are always in the presence of God, and that only wrong-doing can shadow its brightness for us; and when he is old he will not depart from from what you taught him as a little child.

II.—The Presence of God.

[This paper and the following one contain suggestions for one or more lessons, according to the judgment of the teacher, and the capacity of those to be taught, on the great thought of the Presence of God manifested in the Universe. Some of the ideas are original, some are not; and if any are unconsciously borrowed, I must ask for forgiveness.]

Have you ever thought how easy it is to take the life of a tiny fly on the window pane, and how impossible it is for even the wisest man in the world to give back the little life that you may have taken away, almost without thinking, in your play?

There is so much that is wonderful in

this world of ours, and one of its greatest wonders is the mind of a wise man; but not the wisest man that ever lived has been able to give back a life that has once been taken away. Some men, who have been children like yourselves, have risen to be mighty rulers and thinkers. They have trained sounds to make the music that we love; they have forced steam to be their servant; they have tamed the lightning to obey a little child's touch; and have even caught the wind and made it take messages for them. When we think of all this, and of many more marvels that the mind of man has found out, there comes a thought to each one of us: Who made men think of such wonderful things? Surely it is God.

Go out on some starry night, and look up into the sky, and you will see the great worlds marching silently and in perfect order, each on its own special path; and again there comes the same thought how great God must be, 'Who has made all things well.'

In *Psalm* xix. the writer says:—

The heavens declare the glory of God;
and the firmament sheweth his handi-
work.

If the silent heavens tell us of the Presence of God everywhere, how much more do we not feel it in the beautiful living world that surrounds us on every side?

In *Psalm* cxxxix. the writer says the thought of the knowledge of God is so great that he cannot understand it, and he asks:

Whither shall I flee from thy presence ?
 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there ;
 If I make my bed in Sheol (that is the
 underground world) behold, thou art
 there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and
 dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ;
 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and
 thy right hand shall hold me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee ;
 but the night shineth as the day : the
 darkness and the light are both alike
 to thee.

At the close the Psalmist seems to
 have realized the beauty of the thought
 that we are always in the Presence of
 God, and very humbly he asks to be
 set free from any wickedness, for he
 has learnt that only wrong-doing can
 keep us from drawing closer to our
 Father Who is in Heaven.

A wise man was once asked if he
 found it difficult to believe the story
 told in the Book of Joshua of the sun
 and the moon standing still for a whole
 day, and he answered 'No' ; because
 what always filled him with astonish-
 ment was that they never wanted
 to rest !

When we think of the mighty
 worlds which surround our little
 planet, and of the Great Mind that
 has formed the laws that all must
 obey, from the highest to the lowest
 of His creation, we feel inclined to
 say with the Psalmist :—

What is man, that thou art mindful of him ?

Jesus, when he was sending his
 disciples away from the inspiring in-
 fluence of his own presence and faith,

comforted them with the beautiful
 words :—

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ?
 and one of them shall not fall on the ground
 without your Father.

Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more
 value than many sparrows.

To Jesus, this thought of the
 Presence of God must have been very
 real. He taught his lessons from the
 flowers and the grass, the birds, the
 harvest fields, and the vineyards, even
 the hen gathering her chickens under
 her wings, and the sap rising in spring
 time in the branches. In everything
 he felt that God is very near to us,
 nearer than we often think ; for in our
 too hurried lives we are apt to pass
 unheeding by the lovely flowers that
 grow by the wayside, and the exquisite
 beauty of the shell upon the beach,
 each one of which speaks to us of the
 Almighty.

The American poet Longfellow has
 written a lovely little poem about a
 man who spent his life studying the
 secrets of the Universe, and I should
 like you to know two of the verses,
 because they speak so simply of the
 thought that I have been trying to tell
 you about :—

And Nature, the old nurse, took
 The child upon her knee,
 Saying : ' Here is a story-book
 Thy father has written for thee.'

' Come, wander with me,' she said,
 Into regions yet untrod ;
 And read what is still unread
 In the manuscripts of God.'

When I was a child I thought God was much nearer to the old Israelites than He is to us now, and I used to wonder why He never spoke to us. But now that I have left childhood far behind, I know that God is very close to us, and His thoughts are all round us, only waiting for us to understand them. And sometimes when I come across a tiny flower nestling in the grass, or find a fossil shell in the rocks, still perfect in form, though its fragile inmate lived thousands of years ago, the thought comes to me that both of them speak of the love and power of God more plainly than any words could do, and one thinks of the words Jesus said :—

If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe (or take care of) you, oh ye of little faith ?

If He has created the life that gives beauty to the flower and the shell, and watches over all that He has made, how much more will He not care for us who have hearts to love and reverence Him ?

The more we learn of His laws, which are always waiting to be learnt, like an open book of His infinite wisdom, the more we shall feel the truth which the poet has crystallized for us in the verse which ought to be written large in every home :—

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small,
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

III.—The Great Choice.

ONE of the world's great poets once wrote an ode beginning :—

I have erected a monument more lasting than brass.

All over the world there are scattered monuments, the remains of a people who have passed away before the dawn even of tradition, and all that they have left behind them are the huge piles of stone that probably were erected as monuments to the dead. For thousands of years they have stood, and are still standing, in memory of some hero or heroes who were thought worthy to be remembered ; but not a fragment remains to tell us who is buried beneath these great stones, nor even the faintest whisper of a name. Even the very language of the builders has passed away.

You may have seen one of the great cromlechs and barrows that are still to be seen in England, and perhaps the thought has come to you as it has come to older people : What were these mighty monuments intended to commemorate ?

In Genesis we read :

Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

And he called the name of that place Beth-el.

But the cromlech builders have left nothing behind them, not even a tradition to clear away the mysteries that

enshroud their erections ; and we can only wonder at the greatness of the deeds or faith that made men, who had neither the knowledge of metals nor machinery, raise the piles that have endured through countless ages, and will still be standing when the memory of our own names shall be long passed away. Does the thought sometimes come to you : What monument am I building that I can leave behind me ?

It is not a heap of stones, but the memory of a loving, useful life that will help to make the world better, and be most precious in our Father's eyes.

We have each our span of life to live out, well or ill, and then we are called Home, and the dead form that once was the resting-place of a spirit, but in death is only the empty chrysalis telling of the life that is beyond the grave, is laid tenderly away, and all that remains is the monument that each one of us builds during our lifetime.

There is a very beautiful parable in the Gospels telling of a man travelling into a far country, and, before he left, giving the care of his property to his different servants, and of the way in which they each fulfilled their trust. You children are now growing up to man and womanhood, and to each of you is entrusted, not a gift just for a short time, but something for which each of you must render a faithful account to God. It is a very serious thought to consider : 'What is the special talent that has been lent to me for my life-time, and that I must

return more perfect for the care that I have taken of it ?

In *Deuteronomy xxx.* the children of Israel are told of the consequences of obeying the voice of God or of not following His laws. They are told that :

This commandment is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it ? Neither is it beyond the sea that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it ?

But the word (that is the truth of which the writer speaks) is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

Then comes the most solemn part of this beautiful chapter. The Israelite is told that good and evil have been set clearly before him, and that he can choose between them :—

See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.

But he is warned that if he chooses to do evil, if he turns away in his heart and worships other gods, he will surely perish :—

I call heaven and earth to witness this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse ; therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed may live :

That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him : for He is thy life, and the length of thy days.

I do not think that this passage needs any explanation.

To each of us comes a time when we have to make up our minds whether we will choose good or evil. It comes early in life to some, and later to others; but it always comes sooner or later, and the encouragement to choose the good that was given to the Israelite applies equally to each one of us:—

Be strong and of a good courage.

And the Lord, He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

In the Epistle of St. James the writer says:—

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Very few of us can say that we have never had the choice given to us. If we have not heeded it, then surely in Shakespeare's words:—

The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our stars,
But in ourselves.

I wish myself that there could be some service in every church corresponding to the Order of Confirmation, when, like the young squire watching his armour before knighthood, the boy and the girl, realising that they have left childhood behind them, promise in the presence of God and of all men that, as they have taken the responsibility of their lives into their own hands, so faithfully and reverently they will do their best to fulfil the trust reposed in them. Hearts and bodies must be made holy and governed in the ways of God's laws if we are to

render a faithful account of the talent entrusted to us, so that even the youngest among us may feel that he is building, slowly and carefully, a monument more lasting than brass, that shall endure when the stone cromlechs have crumbled into dust.

And when we feel the greatness of the responsibility, and long for help and guidance in the fashioning of our lives, what better answer can there be to our petition than these words consecrated by many an earnest young heart:—

Our help is in the name of the Lord;
Who hath made heaven and earth.

I. M. R.

GOLD LEAF.

A MAN whom I know has to work daily at cutting out letters and figures for fixing on windows and 'fanlights.' Sometimes he has plenty of leaf in stock and of a good size, so that the work goes on merrily. Sometimes, however, he has only edgings and scraps left, or the lettering is required to be specially large. What is he to do? Leave off work and sigh for better times? Oh, no; like you when work is difficult he has to do his best. He gets together his scraps, and cuts, and 'pieces,'—very patiently and carefully,—and somehow he generally gets through all right. We sometimes have to make 'small mercies' do, and, if we see how golden they are and use them thankfully, they *do* do after all.

'I counsel thee to buy of me gold . . . that thou mayest become rich.' *Rev. iii. 18.*)

The Esprit de Corps of the Sunday School.



Who engage in Sunday-school work are naturally anxious to create an atmosphere about us and our scholars which shall be favourable to healthy and quickening life. We discuss various subjects of interest with a view to obtaining clearer insight into the needs and resources of our work. Anything that affords us additional facility we heartily welcome. What kind of books we should use; what to do for elder scholars; and a hundred other similar questions we ask again and again. There is something tangible about them; we may have differences of opinion with regard them, and yet we can get round them and handle them. It is scarcely such plain sailing with regard to our present subject, which is of a more subtle character. What is *esprit de corps*? There is nothing tangible about it; you can only judge of it by its results. It is not a commodity you can buy at the bookseller's. You cannot introduce it by vote into the Sunday School as you can do with teachers. You cannot place your finger on the spot and say 'There is the source of it.' Probably everything about the school is connected with it, although it is itself rather an atmosphere, a condition of things, than a thing. Now, I turn to my old

friend 'Webster,' and I find that he defines *esprit de corps* thus:—'The common spirit pervading the members of a body or association of persons. It implies sympathy, enthusiasm, devotion, and jealous regard for the honour of the body as a whole.' Capital! This is a sufficient definition for me. That is just the state of things that ought to prevail in a Sunday school. It is not, however, to be found in perfection in my own school, or in any other school with which I am acquainted. Some schools are, however, noted for it much more than others; and it is most gratifying to observe how their scholars stick together all through life, and speak of their respective schools as if they were the only ones in the world worth talking about. I do not regard this sort of thing as mere boasting; on the contrary, I am sure it springs spontaneously out of reverence for an institution which has afforded its scholars a boundless source of instruction, of help, and of enjoyment. When your average attendance is low, when your scholars habitually arrive late, when your elder scholars seem ashamed to join, or are indifferent about joining, with the juniors in the opening and closing services, when your teachers take no pains to come prepared with a useful lesson, when you hear scholars 'running down' the school and speaking of it with a sneer, and scorning to engage in any work for its benefit, and leaving as soon as their parents allow them to smoke cigarettes or walk out with

friends of the opposite sex, you may depend upon it that there isn't enough moral oxygen in the atmosphere; your library may be full of books, your walls hung with pictures, but still the most important element in school life is wanting. How can it be obtained?

Of course we must recognise as we grow older that habits and customs change, just as the cut of our clothes changes. We must no more expect to fall into all the routine of school life of twenty years ago than to wear the out-of-date fashions of that period. Yet the charge is made that twenty years ago there was much more *esprit de corps* in the Sunday school than there is to-day. It is increasingly difficult to get our scholars to walk in procession between school and church, or to the railway station on fête days. Perhaps this is nothing to be surprised at when you see how at Sunday services in church parents allow their children to sit anywhere and everywhere. It is becoming a rare thing to see a whole family sitting together in the same pew. Then, in how many schools do the elder scholars set the younger ones that perfect example of decorous behaviour which is reasonably expected of them? How many of them enter heart and soul, and withal voluntarily, into a systematic preparation which will enable them to take up the work of teaching, &c., as vacancies may arise in the staff?

We want both teachers and scholars

to feel that no temptation could be strong enough to drag them away from their Sunday class. It is lamentable to hear scholars say, in answer to a question as to where they were the previous Sunday, 'Oh! nowhere particular'; or to receive no apology from a teacher for absence; or for a teacher to absent himself deliberately without having provided a substitute. It is folly to expect scholars to have enthusiasm and jealous regard for the honour of their school when they are treated discourteously by their teachers, and find occasionally that no sort of provision has been made for the conduct of their class. In business, this sort of thing would lose a man the best situation in the world. Teachers should be every bit as earnest and scrupulous about their class work on Sunday as they are about their business the rest of the week. There is no justification for slovenliness in spiritual matters.

Esprit de corps is not the same thing as discipline, and yet it is closely connected with discipline. A school should be alive. All its joints should be articulated. Every limb of it should be strong through continuous use. All concerned should be actuated by a healthy pride and rivalry. This is perhaps a more important matter with our Unitarian schools than with the orthodox schools. Unitarians are a free-thinking lot of folk, and are not to be moved by threats of pains and penalties. Their ideas of salvation do not coerce them to drive their children off to Sunday school

punctually and regularly, necessarily. They do not always keep them up to the mark, and when you ask them how it is that Tom has not been to school for the last Sunday or two, they say 'Oh, he's been all right, I've had him with me'; and they tell themselves that he has been learning as much in their company as he could possibly have learnt in the Sunday school. Frankly, I believe that if only fathers would devote themselves conscientiously to the edification of their children on Sunday afternoons, it would be far better for them to be in their company than at the Sunday school. But that 'If'! Nowadays, in the rush and exigency of business, fathers do not see half enough of their children, and they exercise precious little direct influence upon the moulding of their young lives. Still, that's a big question which would require a special essay. If they send their children to school, it should be with a full appreciation of the necessity and value of discipline there, and of all other elements which tend to establish and strengthen an *esprit de corps*.

There should be no officialism about our teachers. They should not seem to regret every time they meet their scholars that they cannot use the cane as the day-school teachers do. The youngsters will soon find out whether their teachers take much trouble on their behalf, and whether they are downright in earnest about instilling moral precepts and imparting religious knowledge. In the old days, when I

was a Sunday scholar, there seemed to be more cultured teachers, comparatively speaking, than nowadays. We boys were proud of having for our teachers such men as the curator of the Museum, the manager of the Bank, men successful in business and leaders in municipal life, and foremost of all John Withers Dowson, the lawyer-philanthropist, who, like his protégé Travers Madge, spent his life in imparting knowledge to the young and impressing upon them the beauty of moral character. These were educated men, and they gave an *éclat* to the school. Not a single word of discouragement would I say to our humbler teachers. God help them in their noble and self-sacrificing work. I am sure God will bless them; but I do mean to say that it is sinful for men and women of talents nowadays to shirk their share of responsibility, and, because they have luxurious homes, to refuse to spend an hour on Sunday afternoons with a class of girls or boys who happen to be their social inferiors. But let us plod on. We shall reap our reward if we faint not.

Then, again, our Sunday school was connected with a chapel which seemed to want us and to take an interest in us; for one Sunday afternoon a month we used to assemble in it to take part in a Children's Service, and every Sunday morning the elder classes were marched there to sit with the Superintendent near the pulpit. In a variety of other ways we were led to think ourselves important factors in the life

of that religious centre. Further, our teachers paid visits to our homes. They became friendly with our parents, and out of respect for them and their work our parents insisted upon our punctual and regular attendance. There was a little provident club attached to the school, into which we paid a penny or halfpenny a week, and from which we were entitled to sick pay. So in our little ailments, periodic visits from our superintendents and teachers were assured; and all this had a wonderful effect upon the predominating spirit of the school. When in connection with Sunday schools you hear again and again of parents withdrawing their children because they are disgusted with the indifference and carelessness of teachers who never trouble themselves to enquire whether absence is due to sickness or truancy, and that scholars linger on beds of sickness and even die without a kind word of sympathy from the Sunday school, can you be surprised that there is no *esprit de corps* in those schools, and that affairs are conducted in a lackadaisical and half-hearted manner? If you do not make it manifest that you have a very deep interest in your scholars' welfare, how can you think that your scholars will have any interest in you really? Secure the respect of your scholars, and the maintenance of discipline will be an easy matter.

So, also, if teachers and superintendents have their hearts in their work, and seek to attain to the highest

ideals, an *esprit de corps* will manifest itself in the school, and all concerned will, in a spirit of commendable pride, have a jealous and enthusiastic regard for the honour of the school. Is there not a marked difference in the tone of a class when its scholars have a thorough respect for the teacher, and where they are all banded together as comrades; and in that same class when a change of teachers comes about and the old regard wanes away? In an ideal class all its members have common interests. In the spring and summer they look forward to their Saturday afternoon rambles together; and in the winter they are scheming their class parties and what they shall do towards helping to make the general Christmas party a success. The elder scholars ought to be expected to share in the responsibilities and government of the school;—it is all the better if they also have representation on the committee of the church. Church and school should work in perfect harmony as parts of one whole, neither complete without the other. Where there is a representative of the scholars on the church committee, many an indiscretion will be avoided, and that august body will be less ignorant on school matters than it often is at the present time. Likewise, a church representative should serve on the school committee, and it is surprising how much all this will heighten the respect of Sunday school workers. Then there is a recreative side of Sunday school life which is desirable and healthy.

Let your young people do the rough work ; let their elder classes feel the power and dignity of government ; develop their independence and patriotism by encouraging them to express their wishes and opinions ; don't forget the value of week-night work amongst them. Get to know what their opportunities and biases are, and tempt them into paths of wisdom and pleasantness. Take care to create and strengthen within them the feeling that their school is not isolated ; that it is affiliated to a district association, and that to a national association comprising many thousands of scholars ; that these institutions have a noble history behind them ; and that although the character of their work has changed, the need for their strenuous effort is greater than ever. Make them realise that the success of their own school does not depend only upon the architecture of the building, or the character of the teachers, but also upon themselves ; and that the scholars of a school can do very much towards the attainment of a true success.

All such sentiments as these have a vast effect upon national life and character. A Briton believes in his country. 'Britannia rules the waves' ; British pluck and endurance are unrivalled ; British workmanship is supreme ; there is no other country under the sun which can compare with this, no other so well worth living in ; wherever a Briton goes in the wide world he sticks up for his country, he boasts of her politics, her literature,

the privileges and freedom of her citizens ; in fact, he thinks her without a compeer under heaven. So, too, I would have spring up and flourish in our Sunday schools that feeling of honour and regard for them which will make our scholars take a pride in everything that concerns their life and well-being ; and which will constrain them, wherever they are, at home or abroad, to uphold their school's good name through thick and thin, to rally to its aid whenever it needs help, and to stick to one another in a real brotherly sympathy, springing out of a common love for the school in which such valuable religious and moral influences were exerted upon their lives. Point out to me such a school, and I will refer you back again to it for an illustration and example of what I mean by *esprit de corps*.

CHARLES ROPER.

WHEN you see a child brought up in the way he should go, you see a good of which you cannot measure the quantity nor perceive the end ; it may be communicated to the children's children of that child. It may last for centuries ; it may be communicated to innumerable individuals. It may be planting a plant, and sowing a seed, which may fill the land with the glorious increase of righteousness, and bring upon us the blessings of the Almighty.

SYDNEY SMITH.

Nature Lessons from Ruskin.

Introduction.

THE works of John Ruskin are among the most useful books for the teacher or preacher. The present writer has found them so often suggestive in the matter of illustration that the following outlines came to be sketched, and it is hoped that many other teachers will find them serviceable. The lessons are not intended to be taken to school and read in class, but to be read and thought over at home during the week. The power of any lesson will be lost if the teacher has to produce the printed page, and study his notes in front of the assembled class. Whatever the subject be, the Sunday school teacher should get his facts and thoughts well into his mind, so as to be ready to impart them to his scholars freely; and this method is particularly needful in dealing with subjects like those of the following series.

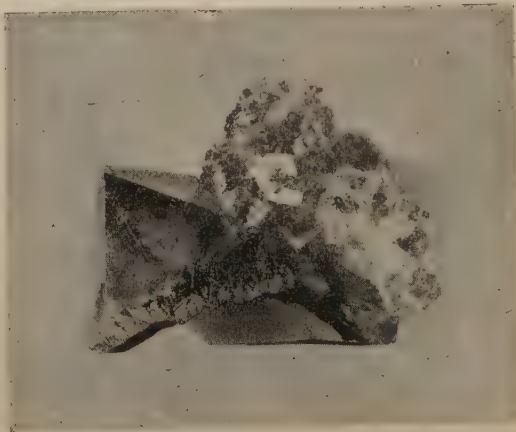
It would be well if the passages mentioned at the head of each lesson could be read by the teacher; but the aim has been to write the outlines in such a way that, should it be impossible for the teacher to refer to the

works of John Ruskin, he will find sufficient matter condensed into each section of these notes to furnish an ordinary Sunday afternoon's lesson.

The short quotations given in the text are from Mr. Ruskin, unless otherwise noted.

Lesson I. Crystals.

Ethics of the Dust, Introduction and Chaps. 1, 2, and 3.
Malachi iii. 13-18.



Quartz Crystals and Iron Ore.

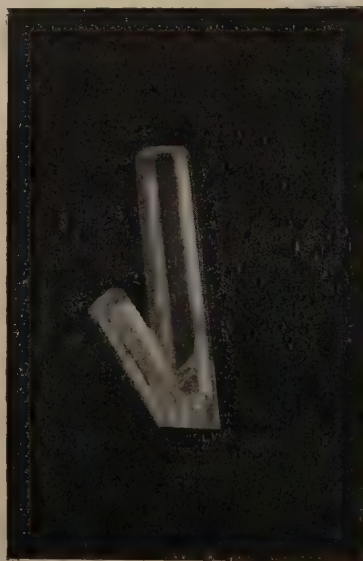
1. It is not a little remarkable that, by the title of the little book from which we take our lesson, Mr. Ruskin hints that, in connection with 'dust' there should be such a thing as 'ethics,' that is, 'moral principles.' The dust

of the roadside is, perhaps, the most despised thing we can think about. Instead of considering the 'ethics' connected with it, we trample it under foot, without so much as a thought about it, except whether it is hard or easy to walk upon. But it is full of interest in many ways. Often it is crowded with such wonderful things as eggs of tiny insects, which, when the warm sun has done its work, will come to life as beautifully-marked moths. Or it contains broken pieces of shells, which, years ago, were the dwelling-places of delicate creatures of the sea. Or, as in most cases, it abounds in broken pebbles, which once were part of some high mountain, and have been brought along by the torrent and stream through the valley and into the city. It is not too much to say that there is no grain out of the millions which make up a roadway which would not tell an interesting story if it could but speak of its past existence.

2. We consider that diamonds are the most precious of the crystal fragments found in the soil; and we are to try, in our present lesson, to understand something of their wonders and properties.

3. Precious stones are known from ordinary stones by their geometric shapes, their extreme hardness, and their transparency. These three qualities are given to them by a process known as crystallization. Mr. Ruskin teaches his class of girls what he can about this process by experiments

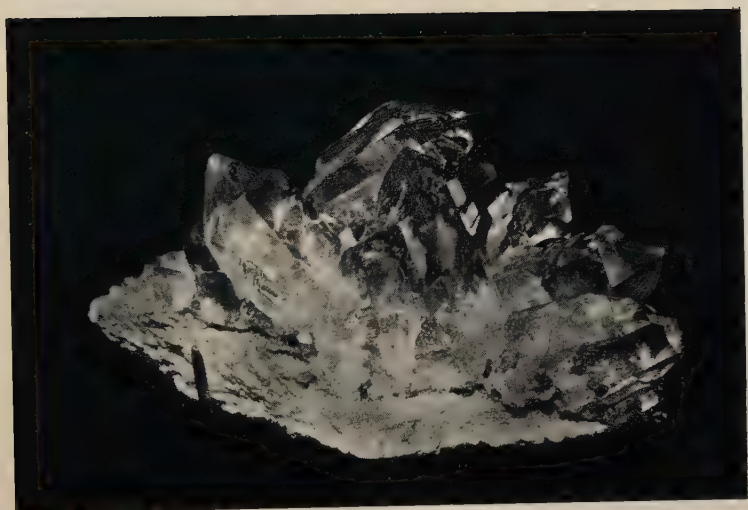
which he induces the girls to make with themselves. Diagrams, such as crosses, squares, and 'diamonds,' are chalked upon the playground. Each girl has to learn her exact place in a chosen diagram, and then she may run off and amuse herself in the play-



Crystals of Calcite.

ground as she will; returning to her place when a certain bell is rung.

4. When the girls are scattered in the playground, they represent atoms before crystallization has taken place. The bell-ringing by the teacher represents the mysterious power which we



SMOKY QUARTZ.



CRYSTALS FROM ST. GOTTHARD.

call crystallization; and the girls when arranged exactly in their places are to be considered as the atoms formed into precious jewels.

5. But no entirely satisfactory explanation can be given by the cleverest men of the process which produces these beautiful crystals. Mr. Ruskin shows his class a box containing a specimen from his collection of minerals. They say it looks like an ugly brown stone; but the mysterious power has been at work upon the mass, and the teacher shows them that it is a knot of pebbles fastened together by gravel amongst which can be seen grains of gold, and two bead-like substances which are the jewels.

6. What a vast influence these tiny substances have had upon humanity! We examine their beauty and lustre and are so delighted with them that we may imagine nothing but good can result from them. And yet we know how vain women have become in wearing them, and how base and frivolous and miserable in desiring them. We know also that many men have been guilty of evil deeds in seeking to obtain gold, either at the mines or after it has been coined, and have not hesitated to allow health, rest, comfort, knowledge, and religion to be entirely neglected in order that they may accumulate it. And to obtain the coveted treasure, whether of metals or jewels, traitors have sold earth's noblest prophets. When Christ is betrayed, it is not, as far as we can see, because Judas disbelieves in him, but

because of the bag containing thirty pieces of silver. Thus the moral power exerted by these beautiful objects is as mysterious as their physical existence.

7. You look at the shining crystals amongst the gravel and gold, and naturally imagine they have all been swept down from the mountain together, but whilst you can trace the gravel and gold to their native rocks, you cannot so trace the diamond. The usual idea is that it is simply charcoal crystallized, and this may be correct; but the difficulty is why this charcoal should be shaped into diamonds in India and only into blacklead in England. It is the same material, but in India it is transformed into brilliant and beautiful jewels, and in England it is the dull lead with which your pencils enable you to write.

8. We are told by scientific men that atoms of 'carbon,' or charcoal, are amongst the most common of the materials with which things are made up. But how different are the uses that they serve! Some are used to build chairs and tables, and others to make the brains of philosophers; while innumerable other spheres are occupied by others of these tiny things. But though men are able to discover that all these things are made up of similar atoms, they still are in doubt about the causes which make some atoms go one way and others another. What, for instance, should lead some to find their way into cracks and small crevices of split rocks, become crystallized into diamonds or

others into rubies, and then be sought out to adorn fair ladies and handsome men; whilst others of the same kind fall into the same crevices, without crystallizing, to remain mixed with the gravel or sand and be considered of no consequence at all? We cannot tell; but we do know that some of these little particles are drawn together by some unknown attraction, and then either by heat, pressure, or some other power, are united into the beautiful form and clearness of a crystal. Most diamonds are built up of as many tiny atoms as there are stones in the great pyramids of the Egyptian desert; but whilst the monarch Cheops is known to have directed his slaves in the erection of the pyramid of Gizeh, we search in vain for the skilful hand that builds the small crystal enclosing its wonderful fire.

9. We, like Mr. Ruskin's pupils, probably do not like to be called 'atoms' or 'dust,' but it would be well for us to remember that it is just as mysterious why and how Providence has led us to be constructed just as we are, and placed just where we are, and that it is our duty to use our circumstances to the very utmost and best, and so adorn the little crevice of earth in which we find ourselves fixed.

10. It is very good for us to know that there is a great controlling power, though we have not fully discovered its nature, directing all the atoms, and that we are among those so directed. Just as the great split rocks may fall into ruin, if the cracks are not filled up

and cemented by the crystalline atoms, so something must go wrong if we do not do our duty in our little crevice. Though we may consider ourselves but separate atoms, we must learn that we have to work in conjunction with others. We shall be drawn to these others with whom we ought to work by the hidden and irresistible forces of our affections, and together, shall become quite valuable jewels, and be privileged to perform really important work in the world—and be a pleasure even to the King of all.

11. But above all things else we must remember that if it is only a tiny out-of-the-way crevice we have to fill, even there, though we do not like to be called 'dust,' we must at least behave as well as dust, not getting out of our right place except by compulsion.

Lesson II. Moss

Modern Painters, Vol. 5, Chap. x. 24 and 25.
Proserpina. Chap. I.

1. If we could see a list of the common things about which we imagine we know a great deal, but of which we know in reality very little, we should be very much surprised at its length. Mr. Ruskin, who seems, from his books, to have known a great deal about most natural objects, wrote in 1868, 'In three months I shall be fifty years old, and I don't at this hour—ten o'clock in the morning of the two hundred and sixty-eighth day of



QUARTZ CRYSTAL (Spar)
With moss attached and growing on it.



my forty-ninth year—know what “moss” is.’

He had always intended to find out; but, because the moss was so common and specimens of it were always to be had with no more trouble than just walking into the garden—and because it was so beautiful and rather difficult

instead of slaty rocks. Inferior mosses, even, are used by nature to decorate and chequer stones, though they never seem to conceal them entirely; and on broken rocks, the mosses grow silently and slowly and set themselves the task of producing there most exquisite harmonies of colour.



Lycopod.

to examine, he had never carefully studied it.

2. As generally viewed, moss is simply a beautiful velvety carpet, covering large masses of tree stems in our sheltered woods and rocks on our barren plains, and the fallen stones of ruined temples. The higher kinds completely bury pieces of rock and make them appear like golden cushions

3. They do not attempt to conceal the form of the rock, but gather over it in little groups and bosses, and present to the eye varied parts of their structure, possessing many harmonies. For these little patches, which seem like tiny cushions of velvet, show, when closely examined, such colours as dark ruby, gold, white, grey, orange, deep green and purple, passing into black.

These colours are found to be possessed by the small stalks and leaves, caps and fibres—all beautifully woven together and made to follow the curves and ledges of the stone so closely that the stone becomes charged with as much colour as it can receive, 'and instead of looking rugged, or cold, or stern, or anything that a rock is held to be at heart, it seems to be clothed with a soft, dark leopard skin, embroidered with arabesque of purple and silver.'

4. Let us not forget that this beautiful work is performed by some of the humblest vegetable things that live,— 'Meek creatures full of pity, covering with strange and tender honour the scarred disgrace of ruin; laying quiet finger on the trembling stones, to teach them rest.' No words are delicate, perfect, or rich enough to tell what these mosses are. 'How is one to tell of the rounded bosses of furred and beaming green; the starred divisions of rubied bloom, fine-filmed, as if the Rock Spirits could spin porphyry as we do glass,—the traceries of intricate silver, and fringes of amber, lustrous, arborescent, burnished through every fibre into fitful brightness and glossy traverses of silken change, yet all subdued and pensive, and framed for simplest, sweetest offices of grace, they will not be gathered, like the flowers, for chaplet or love-token; but of these the wild bird will make its nest, and the wearied child his pillow.'

5 Though we easily recognise their beautiful work, when thus pointed out, we know but little of their nature and

life. In all their aspects they are wonderful. Figuiet says 'These mosses, which often form little islets of verdure at the feet of poplars and willows, are robust vegetable organisms, which do not decay.' Do they then possess immortality?

6. To answer this question Mr. Ruskin consults all the books in his library which should help him, but in vain. He then walks into his garden to select some specimens of moss in order to examine them. He takes 'a bit of old brick, emerald green on its rugged surface, and a thick piece of mossy turf.' Of course there are thousands of species of moss, all differing more or less, but all having little clusters of leaves, bright green in the centre and darker as the outside is reached. From the midst of this bright centre a fibrous root is sent down to get what nourishment it can from the dust which gathers upon the stone; and a thin red fibre is sent up to bear, in its proper season, its brown cap of seed.

7. From this it will be seen that the moss possesses the ordinary parts of vegetable structure, from the root up to the seed; and so it would naturally be expected to have its period of decay and death. How then can it be said by Figuiet, that mosses 'do not decay'?

8. If we pull any little tuft to pieces, we shall see, by the aid of a magnifying glass, that individually the moss plant consists of a little bunch of fibres tied in the middle. A stem rises from the centre of the bunch, bent at the top, apparently with the weight of the little

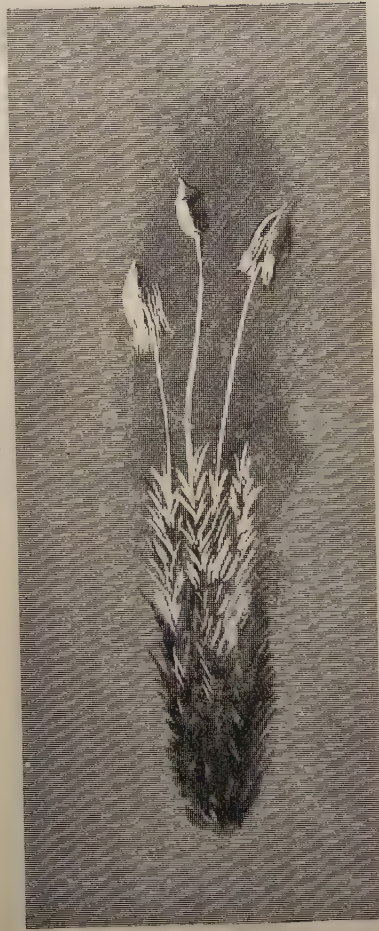


MOSS.

1. *Atrichum undulatum*.
2. *Funaria hygrometrica*.
3. Capsule of (2) magnified.

seed case which it carries. The leaves nearest the ascending spike are bright green, those farther away from it are brown, and the outside ones are almost black, whilst the root fibres are entirely black. This blackness at the root is the one thing we are asked by Mr. Ruskin to think of. It will explain how it is said that the mosses do not decay. The leaves do not fall as leaves of higher plants fall. Their decay is gradual and invisible. New leaves continually rise in the centre, green and bright, and push the older leaves farther from their fountain of life, taking from them light and air, and causing them to darken and die slowly, till they ultimately become particles of mouldering ground. So you never see decaying leaves of moss. Their failing is so beautifully gradual that they are soft rich mould before you recognise any change. Mr. Ruskin points out that this is their chief work and duty. Whilst the main work of other leaves is to live and grow and get life, moss leaves have to die in order to form earth out of which other plants of a higher type may grow. The uses, therefore, of mosses, are, first to beautify barren rocks and grey stones with their golden velvet, and secondly to fill the stone crannies with dark rich earth in which nobler creatures may afterward seek to live.

9. In this way the life of a moss plant becomes a picture of the life of human thought. All thought, if real and living, is a growth out of former thought. While it lives it is good for



POLYTRICHUM FORMOSUM.
(A Wood Moss growing in tufts.)

its time, and serves its purpose well; but that good, useful thought will yet perhaps come to appear foolish thought, and then die quite away, as better thought and knowledge come. But the higher thought would not have been possible, had not the lower thought first lived and then died in giving birth to the higher thought.

10. The student of music has to take great pains in learning the notes; but as advance is made in knowledge and use, the names of the notes are not considered—the memory of them has almost faded away. The sight of the printed page is enough and the keys are struck instinctively. The playing would not be rapid enough if every note had to be carefully translated before the finger struck the chords. The rapid work, however, would not be possible, unless the more laborious stage of note-learning had been previously gone through. It is the same with reading. We do not trouble about the individual letters. We have got beyond that in the knowledge of the form and grouping of words. We have almost forgotten letters, as in composition we almost forget the rules of grammar which we now instinctively obey.

The intellectual progress of the world has been on similar lines. The ideas of God and the Universe which early nations had, were good in their time; but they had to die in order to give place to newer and better beliefs. Some of these may in their turn have to die in giving place to others yet—for

we have not attained to the full and perfect knowledge of God and his work.

Individually we must pass through the same development—for growth is the order of our existence and life. The notions of our childhood will have to give place to higher and better thoughts, but the thoughts of maturity cannot come, unless the earlier cruder thoughts do their honest work, live their lives, beautifying and serving their places in their appointed times.

Lesson III. Grass.

Matt. xx. 27.—‘Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.’

Modern Painters, Vol. 3, Chap. xiv., ‘The Fields.’

Modern Painters, Vol. 5, Chap. i., ‘The Earth-Veil.’

1. The earth veil.—We cannot imagine a landscape without the beautiful grass. The earth would be intolerably dark and dull and ugly if it were not for its green coverlet. The Creator surely thought of our instinct for the beautiful when he arranged the objects of this wonderful creation; and in none of them is this thought so clearly seen as in grass. The useful earth must be made beautiful for man, and so it is covered with a delicate veil of a colour most suitable for the human eye. No other colour is so restful to man’s sight as green. Even the pure white snow and the bright yellow of sunshine or sand are too dazzling to be endured by us for

long. So these colours are not so common as the tender green of grass. And what a variegated veil it is! If you attempt to paint a landscape, you soon discover that there are thousands of tints of green made by nature in vegetation—and you find its patterns are as varied as its tints. This veil of vegetation is 'the means by which the earth becomes the companion of man—his friend and teacher.'

2. The rocks themselves are the means by which preparation is made for man's existence—he is enabled, by them, to live on the earth safely and to work easily.

Those rocks, however, are inanimate and passive; but 'vegetation is to the earth as an imperfect soul, given to meet the soul of man.' 'The earth in its depths must remain dead and cold, incapable except of slow crystalline change; but at its surface, which human beings look upon and deal with, it ministers to them through a veil of strange intermediate being; which breathes, but has no voice; moves, but cannot leave its appointed place; passes through life without consciousness, to death without bitterness; wears the beauty



Group of Summer-flowering Grasses.

of youth, without its passion; and declines to the weakness of age without its regret.'

3. **Only a blade of grass.** Such is the aspect of the earth-veil as a whole; but let us look at one of the individuals which make up the general effect. Take a blade of grass in your hand and examine it. Have you ever seen anything so simple or so weak? It is just 'a narrow sword-shaped strip of fluted green,' a few inches long, with a few delicate lines meeting at the blunt and imperfect point; and a pale, feeble, hollow stalk, leading to a few light brown root-fibres. That is the little insignificant organism which does so much to beautify the earth. We think so little of it that we do not hesitate to tread it beneath our feet, or pluck it by the roots and fling it away. 'And yet,' writes Mr. Ruskin, 'think of it well, and judge whether of all the gorgeous flowers that beam in summer air, and of all strong and goodly trees, pleasant to the eyes and good for food,—stately palm and pine, strong ash and oak,—scented citron, burdened vine,—there be any by man so deeply loved, by God so highly graced, as that narrow point of feeble green.'

4. **Humility.** Grass appears to have been created only to be trodden on or fed upon, and is quite content with this lowest service. It is the carpet, we say, to make earth softer for our tread. Though such humility is general in grass, in mankind it is peculiar to the Christian spirit. The ideal Pagan could never be called humble. His

virtue was rooted in pride. It began in the elevation of his own nature. But Christian virtue has derived much of its chief character from self-debasement and suffering.

5. **Cheerfulness.** The Greek gloried in physical and material prosperity but was not at all able to bear patiently any reverse in these directions. If disappointment came to him, he was dejected beyond measure and had nothing in his philosophy to give him a compensating thought.

But the Christian does not find his happiness wholly dependent upon any material prosperity. He can find the gladness of hope even in suffering and disappointment. He is glad if he can be of some slight service to the world, though in that he may be performing the very lowest work. Grass 'seems to exult under all kinds of violence and suffering. You roll it, and it is stronger the next day; you mow it, and it multiplies its shoots, as if it were grateful; you tread upon it, and it only sends up richer perfume. Spring comes, and it rejoices with all the earth,—glowing with variegated flame of flowers,—waving in soft depth of fruitful strength. Winter comes, and though it will not mock its fellow plants by growing then, it will not pine and mourn, and turn colourless or leafless as they. It is always green; and is only the brighter and gayer for the hoar-frost.'

6. We know that to be cheerful under disappointment and suffering is one of the most difficult things in life. But it is possible, for many have shown



PANICLES IN BUD AND FLOWER.

such a bearing, and the Christian must certainly aim to accomplish so much. If he is not cheerful, who then can be? We must seek to exhibit brightness in all the spheres of life, for we belong to a brotherhood whose chief characteristic is that, on account of their strong trust in God and His wise government, they can be cheerful even under great sorrow and difficulty.

Lesson IV. Roots.

‘Being rooted and grounded in love.’—*Ephesians* iii. 17.
Modern Painters. Vol. 5, Chap. i.
Proserpina. Chap. ii.

1. Plants are among the most instructive objects of nature. There are many varieties of them and they are all beautiful in some degree. There can scarcely be a person who remains unimpressed in their presence. They seem to desire to grow everywhere, and will grow wherever men do not prevent them. Earth would remain dead and cold to us, as we saw in our last lesson, but for the kindly office of this beautiful veil which covers the stern rock and dull earth with delicate tints and forms.

2. Vegetation, though differing so much in its varied aspects, has one common principle of life and being. Its manifestations are broadly of three kinds. First it supplies a carpet to make the earth soft for man; then it gives a coloured fantasy of embroidery thereon; then, tall spreading of foliage to shade him from sun heat, and shade

also the fallen rain that it may not dry quickly back into the clouds, but stay to nourish the springs among the moss.

3. But whether it be moss, or flower, or tree, vegetable structure consists chiefly of four parts—the root, stem, leaf, and flower. On closer examination it will be seen that the stem and flower are only altered states of the leaf; and so we might say, ‘a perfect plant consists of leaf and root.’ Every plant possesses these two distinct parts, and these two parts have entirely opposite natures. ‘One part seeks the light, the other hates it. One part feeds on the air, the other on the dust.’

4. In the Old and New Testaments there are many poetical references to plant and human life which make the one a symbol of the other. So, we expect to find in our consideration of plant-life frequent hints about our own. We have two distinct natures, the physical and the spiritual. One, we might say, seeks the light and the other hates it. One part is that outward part which is seen by men—our contact with our fellows, our conversation, our social and business relationships, and the ceremonies and formal part of our religion. The other part is the spiritual life which is hidden from the gaze of men and is known only to God. The hidden life we must call our root, and the revealed life we must call our leaf. The connection between the two is important and vital; though many think they can show leaf and blossom without much attention to the root.

3. The root holds the plant in its place, nourishes it with earth, and receives vital power for it from the earth. Religion is the great root of our life. By it we are held in our place and nourished; and through it only can we secure that vital power which will enable us to face temptations and overcome difficulties. We must not, however, forget that the ceremony merely of prayer and praise, and the presence at public worship, do not constitute religion. These outward parts of our religious life belong to those which are seen of men. They may all be performed without a true grip of the eternal verities of the deepest life, but, like healthy leaves on a plant, they should be, and mostly are, of the utmost help to that life.

6. How does the root hold the plant in its place? It has a peculiar grip, unlike that of a bird's claw or of a tendril of a climbing plant. As it grasps it swells and moves in any direction it pleases, either to avoid an obstacle or to embrace it. A root fibre is never afraid of an obstacle. Immediately it comes into contact with one, it seems to hesitate a moment to see what is the best thing to be done; then, it either travels round it or grasps it. In grasping a flint stone it will mostly draw from it special nourishment which gives strength to the plant. The root will obtain from the ordinary mould 'the salts of potash, of soda, and of lime, ammoniacal compounds, and carbonic acid gas in solution';¹ but when

Figuer, *The Vegetable World*.

special strength is required, as in the case of wheat, flints are put into the field by the agriculturist. These, while becoming obstacles to the forward movement of the root-tips, become the source of power which enables so tall a stalk as a wheat stem to stand erect even with a heavy ear burdening it at the top. The root fibres simply grasp the stone obstacle tightly, sometimes cracking it, but always extracting silica from the hard substance and passing it through the vessels of the plant along with the sap.

7. Obstacles thus become helps to the plant. The roots show no fear on approaching them, but obtain from them strength. How well it would be if we could make a similar use of the obstacles which lie along the pathway of our spiritual progress. There can be no doubt they are placed there for the very purpose of making us strong. We must not allow them to overcome us, but, by firmly and courageously grasping them, overcome them, extracting from them whatever lessons are possible.

Lesson V. Leaves.

Modern Painters. Vol. 5, Chaps. ii., iii., iv. and v.

Proserpina. Chap. iii.

1. When the root has selected the food which will be most nourishing to the plant, and sent it up through the vessels of the stem to the branches and thence to the leaves, a wonderful and mysterious work has been set going.

The sap diffused through the various organs of the plant comes from no apparent pumping machine, and it is difficult to know how the process is carried out. The human body has a heart to act as pump for the circulation of its blood; but the vegetable has no such machine provided for its sap circulation. As far as is known there is no organ in the vegetable to correspond with the heart of man; and yet, the plant has a circulatory system as really as the man.



Section of Stem.

2. The tubes through which the sap passes are beautifully arranged. To take a flower-stem and cut it across, taking a thin slice and examining it through the microscope, is to be introduced to one of the most remarkable

specimens of nature's designing. The circular tubes range round the central tube in regular geometric patterns. Through these tubes the sap flows, on and on, till it reaches the tiny tips of the leaf points, having traversed the whole of the plant structure.

3. The leaves are its strength. 'Nay, rightly speaking the leaves *are* the tree itself. Its trunk sustains, its fruit burdens and exhausts; but in the leaf it breathes and lives.' And its essential character is that it is thin. A leaf is simply a beautiful network of thin delicate bones, in a close fitting coat of the finest material, transparent and colourless, in which coat floats a kind of green blood called chlorophyll. As you hold the frail little green plate in your hand you may say it really consists of substances of the earth selected and collected, sent up through the stem and spread out to the air, in order to receive the beneficial influences of the atmosphere. So that it is well for its bulk to be beaten out quite thin, as in that way its greatest surface will be ready to receive what blessings may be in store for it. When the leaves are thus spread out, the sun shines upon them, giving them warmth, and the dew and rain fall upon them bringing them moisture. So, holding a little branch of vegetation in your hand and looking at it carefully, 'you may read the history of the being of half the earth in one of those green oval leaves—the things that the sun and the rivers have made out of dry ground.'

4. We should surely see in this

vegetable life a picture of the arrangement made by the Great Father for the true life of his children. We have already noted that the root represented our spiritual hold upon the unseen power of the universe; and now we must see in the leaves, emblems of the many means we possess for receiving



Skeletonised Leaf of Black Poplar.

influences from the outside world. The most essential ingredient of our character is to be the spiritual food received in the hidden sphere of the religious life, which is worked upon, and modified by the force of the influences around, such as books, pictures and conversation.

5. We have spoken easily about the root turning the salts of the earth into sap, and the leaves receiving sunshine and dew as food, and we say without hesitancy that the plants and trees 'grow.' 'But you know that they can't grow out of nothing;—this solid wood and rich tracery must be made out of some previously existing substance. What is the substance?—and how is it woven into leaves,—twisted into wood?' Such questions cannot be answered in a few words. It is well, nevertheless, that they should be put to us in order that we should think of the stupendous work going on so persistently around us. What transformations the Spring makes! In February we can scarcely see the green blades of the trampled grass through the hoar-frost on the field; but in three months those same blades are up to your knees; and in a week or two more it is sufficiently advanced to be mown and stacked away as hay. In the early year most of your bushes consist merely of black dried sticks; but in May those same sticks are thick with fresh green leaves. 'Meanwhile the forests, all over this side of the round world, have grown their foot or two in height; with new leaves—so much deeper, so much denser than they were. Where has it all come from? Cut off the fresh shoots from a simple branch of any tree in May. Weigh them; and then consider that so much weight has been added to every such living branch, everywhere, this side of the equator, within the last two months. What is it all made of?'



MALE-FERN DEVELOPING.

6. Botanists tell us that it is chiefly made of the breath of animals. That is to say, the substance which, during the last year, animals have breathed into the air, has been caught by the plants and turned into stalk and leaf. 'So that you may look upon the grass and forests of the earth as a kind of hoar-frost, frozen upon it from our breath, as, on the window-panes, the white arborescence of ice.' And we must not forget that the substance which plants receive and thrive upon, would poison and suffocate animals, if it were not so converted into this beautiful series of trees and flowers. How well this fact illustrates the idea that nothing in God's great Universe is wasted! Such thoughts go to assure us that none of all the myriads of things we see and hear about are isolated and individual organisms merely, but are parts of a great united whole, and that God the Father, who is all love, is working them wonderfully together for good!

Lesson VI. Blossom, Fruit, and Seed.

Proserpina. Vol. I., Chaps. xiii. and xiv.
'By their fruits ye shall know them.'—
Matthew vii. 15-21.

1. We are not surprised that the blossom is the most interesting and popular part of the plant. It is almost impossible to pass by the pretty-tinted, sweet-scented, and beautifully-shaped flower; whilst the leaf of the same plant may be totally unknown and un-

heeded by us. The blossom is the crown and glory of the vegetable world. We want to ask many questions concerning it, for it is one of God's most interesting and wonderful works.

2. First we must ask: How is it that it comes mostly at the top of the plant, or upon the most advanced of its branches? Why does it not show itself low down among the leaves near the ground? The answer given by Mr. Ruskin is that the blossom is the utmost purification and discipline of the plant. Naturally, in getting nourishment from the ground and air, it will get also impurities which it has to get rid of. So, as advance is made in growth, the leaves throwing off the foreign matter which has been taken into the system, the higher leaves become purer than the lower ones, till 'where its tissue is blanched fairest, dyed purest, set in strictest rank, appointed to most chosen office, there—and created by the fact of this purity and function—is the flower.'

3. In human life we find a similar process going on. Heredity and environment, while giving us character and power, compel us to receive evil habits and customs. These have to be got rid of somehow. Our struggles against these things bring about our purification and discipline, and result in a beautiful character which becomes a joy to all who come in contact with it. So we have to use discretion in the intellectual food we take, and guard against any evil tendency which we may have inherited from our ancestors.



Wild Marguerites and Shaking Grass.

If we would have strong religious lives and pure and beautiful blossoms of character, we must get only the good influences of the things with which we are surrounded, and wage continual warfare against any ugly trait we know to have been handed down to us from earlier generations.

4. It may not at once be admitted that the blossom is the object and glory of the flower's life. It is easy to imagine that the chief use of a plant is to produce seed, but it is not. The seed is part of the machinery whose results reach the highest point in the beauty of the flower. The plant's mission in nature is to make the earth look beautiful by producing pretty blossoms. And we human beings have the same kind of mission, only ours is a most distinct and personal one. We are to cheer the lonely and brighten the sad—to scatter about wherever we go the sweet perfume of a devoted life, and so make everybody happier and better who happens to come across the pathway of our life.

5. But the earth's beautiful blossoms do not last for ever. Their exquisite petals fade and drop away. However, we have the joy

of knowing that when they fall to the ground they leave behind a case of seeds containing the possibility of reproduction of other similar blossoms when the next season comes round. This plant-treasury is always an interesting object, and usually consists of two parts—the seed and the

husk. It is not usually recognised that that which we name fruit is simply the husk of the seed, whose chief purpose is to protect the seed. In thinking of the orange, for instance, we are not accustomed to consider the pip as the most important part, for we throw that away. But so far as the orange tree is concerned, the fruit is simply that which protects the seed. From man's point of view, however, the case is different; we care far more for the husk than the seed. Still the seed of a plant is often used for food—'boiled, crushed, or otherwise industriously prepared by man himself, for his mere *sustenance*. But the *husk* of the seed is prepared in many cases for the delight of his eyes, and the pleasure of his palate, by Nature herself, and is then called a "fruit."

6. Every seed, then, is sheltered by a husk, and often that husk shelters more than one seed. While the process of plant-life is very intricate, we should imagine that, when we arrive at the seed, we had come to something very simple. But it is far from that, for the embryo, that is the germ or infant plant, and its nourishment, and the power of a plant issuing from it, form one of the most mysterious processes known in nature. The seed itself has three essential parts. First, there is the living germ which we call the embryo—then there is that substance which is the earliest nourishment of the embryo—and then there is the case in which the embryo and its nourishment are enclosed.

7. A fruit is the husk or other part of a flower which surrounds the seed, in which certain changes have taken place, fitting it to become pleasant and healthful food for man, or other living animals. There are many instances, however, in which it becomes poisonous and deadly. In the lives of men there are those things which correspond to the fruit of the plant. 'By their fruit ye shall know them.' The work which we do for the benefit and enjoyment of others, is that which may properly be called our fruit. It is always the outcome of the thought and spirit which is distinctive of us. That which one person will do will be unlike that which another person will do; just as the fruit of an orange tree will be unlike that of an olive tree. The deeds of our mature life will be the result of our earlier thought, conduct, and struggles, and they will contain that which will be our contribution to the work of the world.

8. One result of our lessons about plant-life should be that of making us realize the earnestness and intensity with which we should perform every item of our humble life. We have found that everything tells. The books we read, the company we keep, the pictures we look at, and, in fact, everything that comes to our notice will have some influence upon the production of the fruit of our lives. None of us want this to be bad and deadly fruit, but to be such as meekness, temperance, faith, and love, for these are 'the fruit of the spirit.'

Lesson VII. Mountain Peace.

'The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.'
—*Psalms* lxxii. 3.

Modern Painters. Vol. 4. Chaps. i., xix. and xx.

1. It is not easy to convey to the town-dweller the impression made upon the minds of people who dwell in mountainous districts, by the sight of formidable and sublime peaks pointing to the sky. The ancient Greeks built their temples upon the loftiest hills near their great cities because of the idea that those hills had something akin to the divine. We know that the Hebrews were very powerfully impressed by them, by the many poetical references in the Psalms to the mountains. 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.' 'As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about those that fear him.' 'The strength of the hills is his also.' 'The mountains shall bring peace to the people.'

2. Though we often speak of the sea being as smooth as glass and talk of it being at rest, we never really see it so. Actual stillness is never seen by the sea-shore. On a beautifully calm day the water may appear perfectly smooth just a little way from where we stand, but at our feet there comes regularly the little tumble of the ever-moving waves, and the weird rattle of the pebbles and shells. There is a feeling, also, that you cannot trust the sea. But as you look up at the mountains

quite a different impression is given. The great hills convey the idea of solidity, stability and refuge. The foundations are so broad; the whole mass has stood for so many ages apparently unmoved. You have confidence in them, for there is nothing which shows anything like the nervous movement of the sea. You feel they are correctly called 'The everlasting hills,' and you do not wonder that the ancients felt secure among them, and used them continually as emblems of the safety which is found in trust in God.

3. The men of the middle ages felt the same sense of safety amongst the hills. If you look through an album of Rhine views, you cannot fail to observe that the knights and nobles who built the many castles had a very strong belief that the hills provided the most secure and safe places, for they mostly built their fortresses and castles upon lofty and precipitous rocks. And it seems very natural to build a bulwark so that it becomes a continuation of nature's own fortress. Mountains appear to afford protection and stability more than any other of nature's objects. Whilst light, clouds and almost all things around them are continually changing, there is no apparent change in their form from age to age. The rain and wind of storms may beat upon their sides, but the wind is sent off in one direction or another with its angry howl, and the rain is received only to swell the mountain's dashing torrent.

4. The Psalmist had observed the Peace which is experienced in their presence, and used mountains in his poems as symbols of the Peace which is obtained as the result of a religious life. Peace is something desired more or less by every person born into the world, for every station of life has its troubles and vexations. Whether it be school, home, business or politics in which most of our time is spent, we shall find some experience which will make us long for rest and peace.

5. What help can the Psalmist's idea of Peace coming from mountains have for us in such circumstances? I think he must have frequently climbed a mountain and realised how free he could be there,—so high and far away from the noisy and tumultuous bustle of city life. Pious men have always sought the quietude of nature; and Jesus went often up into a mountain to pray. So there must be something very real and universal in this instinct.

If you have climbed a lofty hill, you will remember what a struggle the climb was to you. The valley would be warm and thickly covered with vegetation. As you ascended you would leave the tall trees behind you, and then bushes only would be met, till up yonder you would find only grass, and higher still bare rock with nothing of vegetation expect perhaps some simple but beautiful moss. In our own land on the tops of the hills of the lake district you could sit on the moss, or amongst the grass and wild flowers, looking upon reeds and rushes growing

at the edge of the tarns, and you would have nothing to remind you of civilisation. There would be no trace of life except the swaying of the grass blades, the hum of the insects, or the occasional scream of a wild bird flying overhead amongst the clouds.

Around, there would be many tall peaks of neighbouring mountains, perhaps gracefully veiled by the grey mists, but still and ever beautiful. Their changing tints of blue, from a deep velvety violet to a soft lilac, and the gold and pink of those which stand in the range of the rays of some special gleam of sunshine coming through a rift in the clouds, make a most impressive scene.

You do not want to speak to your companion under such conditions. You would like to be alone and listen only to the deep voice within—the 'voice of God.' The faintest breeze murmuring through the grass or the low soft hum of the insect, or the louder moan of the strong wind rushing through the hollows below, move you as nothing else can do; and they too, become to you 'voices of God' out of the great eternal depths.

6. There you realise a peace which you feel you could not get elsewhere. No lowland spot would produce just the same effect; and you seem to know what the Psalmist meant when he spoke of Peace coming from the mountains. It is that experience of restfulness and quietude which comes after a long toil and climb. Our religious life brings with it a similar experience.

There are difficulties and temptations, with which we have to struggle, as in climbing an awkward mountain-path. When we have overcome them and left them behind we realise the quietness and rest of a calm conscience. We have done our part and know that God will do His. We rest and are satisfied. We have this wonderful spiritual peace which can be obtained by no other means. We feel the voice of God is whispering to our spirit, saying that 'all is well.' We are quiet, happy and at rest.

7. That Peace comes after struggle is seen in the physical composition of mountains. Why are they, themselves, so solid, firm and peaceful? The geologist will tell you that it is because of the great agitations that went on, ages ago. The soft crumbling gravel on the valley road will be blown about by the least gust of wind, for that was formed only yesterday comparatively. But the mountains are not so moved. They were not made yesterday, but long ages ago when 'the earth was without form and void'—when it was heated and molten. In the cooling process these lofty granite masses were sent up into the air. Then there was something like a struggle for mastery between fire and water. That conflict produced these firm everlasting hills. After the conflict came peace, and only because of that conflict between the elements are we able to get the quietude which now is ours upon the mountains.

8. Our peace in worship—the privi-

lege to praise and pray as and where we will, was given to us by the struggles of our forefathers for religious liberty. We have but a poor conception of the dangers and difficulties undergone by the brave religious men in days gone by—of persecutions, imprisonment and death—which have resulted in the privileges we enjoy to-day.

9. And there is a *personal* religious peace which is to be obtained by each one of us in overcoming the evil tendencies handed down by previous generations, and wrestling manfully with the difficulty and opposition we now find around us. We must not say the task is too great. God wants us to undertake it, and He himself will see that we are successful in it.

Lesson VIII. Mountain Usefulness.

2 Cor. iv. 15-18.

Modern Painters. Vol. 4, Chap. vii. 'The Dry Land.'

1. In the preceding lesson we saw that mountains were capable of conveying to people the sense of peace; and most will acknowledge that they are beautiful objects of nature; but it is not so easy to realise what *uses* such great inaccessible heights have for the world. According to the generalisation made by Mr. Ruskin they have three main uses; and these uses are so important that it is difficult to conceive of the earth's going on without their help. Mountains give movement to the air; they supply the lowlands with much of their loose earth; and they

start the fresh waters of the globe on their courses of life, beauty and blessing. Perhaps a geologist would not admit that these three functions were quite definite, and comprehensive. But they are sufficiently exhaustive and accurate to give a general idea of the chief part



'They start the fresh waters.'
[Falls of the Kander (Swiss).]

mountains play in the economy of nature. Mountains, then, give movement to three of the most important things we know of, air, earth and water. In this light, how important and really indispensable these great solid hills become!

(a) Standing up like solid giants they face the wind on all sides. Great gusts come from North, South, East and West; but the mountains turn them here and there in ways contrary to those in which they were coming. The current of air thus set in motion will, perhaps, glide gently down one valley and up another, and get a further twist against some other lofty peak. Then, through contact with a more violent current coming by a different way, it will be sent quicker and perhaps be driven into a long straight course on getting into the running of a range of any length. So the wind currents are more or less directed and governed by the mountains.

(b) Pieces of the mountain sides are split by frost, when they break off or crumble. The huge lumps come tumbling down while the smaller particles roll in a gentler way from crag to boulder, getting into the bed of a torrent, or mixing with a glacier or falling with an avalanche. By one way or another they get into the lowland valley forming the pebbles of the roadside or the sand on the sea-shore; but they come from a great height and have their impetus given them by the lofty mountain peak.

(c) And in like manner the streams are set moving. The glacier beginning at the top of the snow-capped point, melts as the sun grows powerful. The melted ice becomes the gentle stream and is joined by another, forming the river which swells as it goes along by underground springs; and

passing through fields and by villages and towns, empties at last into the sea.

2. It will strike you as strange that in one lesson we observed that mountains are considered as peace-bringers, and that in this we are to think of them as types of trouble. We speak of 'mountains of sorrow.' If a friend makes more fuss about a slight disappointment than we think is warranted, we say he is making a mountain out of a mole-hill. But whether our troubles are great or small, they are just as essential to the formation of our perfect character as the mountains are to the proper conduct of the affairs of the physical earth. If our lives are even, uneventful, unopposed, always peaceful and calm, we are not so likely to become sympathetic. The hills of struggle and the mountains of sorrow and opposition, set in motion our thoughts, emotions, and desires to help. So these difficulties are just as important for the proper conduct of our higher natures as the mountains are to the earth.

3. Mountain climbing is not one of the easiest things we can undertake, neither are personal worries amongst the easiest or pleasantest things that fall to our lot. We never see the need of them as we are passing through them, just as the hard rocky road gives but little indication of the beautiful view which is to be seen when we get to the top of the mountain. But we must persevere—overcome the difficulties of the way—and *then* look back!

4. When we are able to take a broad view, the beauty becomes evident.

When you were in the lowlands you passed a drover's hut. It was very crude, patched and strutted, made of mountain stones and rough pieces of timber. It did not look beautiful as you passed it, and you felt you would not like to spend so much as a night in it. It looked unsafe, uncomfortable, and decidedly ugly. That is the idea you got of it when you were close to it. But now you are high upon the mountain side, you look down below and are amazed at the beautiful prospect. You see the hut you thought so ugly, but you notice now how admirably it harmonises with the rest of the landscape. If you were painting that view you would on no account leave out the hut. Its brown mass is a relief to the misty blueness of the mountainous background, and its soft clouds of whitey-grey smoke from the wood fire within look quite pretty.

The experiences of life are often similar. We pass through a disappointment which has seemed to break our will and spirit. It has appeared ugly and unnecessary. We resented it and thought hard things of God who allowed us so to suffer. But we passed through it, and now we see how well it has blended with its surroundings. We know now what it did for us. What we thought was crushing our spirit or breaking our will was only making that will blend with God's, and bringing that spirit into harmony with His. It is not likely that we shall ever see the beauty of these experiences as we pass through them—but the reason

is that we have not climbed high enough up the spiritual mountain to see them in their true setting. One day all will be made clear and we shall see that there was nothing really ugly in them.

5. Mr. Ruskin has pointed out that many of the old masters painted mountains top-heavy, and that they were thus untrue to nature, for every mountain has a wonderfully broad and solid base. Storms may crumble bits off their sides, and frost may crack their surface rocks, but no wind, tempest, or frost can disturb their strong foundations. Their shapes are mostly those of pyramids—broad at the base and towering up, narrower into the air, till their slender points are often lost in misty cloudland. It is perhaps this characteristic which gives them their look of peace and security. Is it not inspiring to think that that is a picture of human life—firm, broad, immovable—grandly spreading on everlasting foundations, built on God, the rock of ages, towering up into the heavens, tapering, getting less earthy as it rises, and penetrating into the very holy of holies of the Divine presence, and becoming Divine itself!

LUCKING TAVENER.

DEVOUTLY look and nought
But wonder shall pass by thee :
Devoutly read and then
All books shall edify thee ;
Devoutly speak, and men
Devoutly listen to thee ;
Devoutly act, and then
The strength of God acts through thee.

Bible Homes.

THE HOME OF ADAM.

Gen. iv.

‘ If a house be divided against itself that house will not be able to stand.’

Mark iii. 25.



HERE is, as every one knows, at the beginning of the Bible a well-told story of how the world was made in six days. It is set down in terms so clear and crisp, and it reads so much like a definite chronicle by someone who was there (!), that thousands of people have thought that it was all true. Indeed, there are people probably still living who if asked how we could get to know the beginnings of men's history on the earth, and the origin of the earth itself, would tell us to read it in *Genesis*.

Most of us have learnt that we must not go to those early chapters of the Bible for historical information, but for story and parable and moral instruction.

THE STORY OF ADAM.

Who does not like that second story in the Bible—the story of Adam. We hear how he lived at first alone in a garden a harmless, blameless man, but friendless and isolated like Crusoe on his island. Then how a wife was given to him, and how they might have been happy and lived in their Eden garden

always, but that a sly talking serpent tricked them into doing wrong and caused them to be sent forth in humiliation and disgrace. And then the story represents that not only were they put outside the garden, but the ground everywhere about them became less manageable. They had to live henceforth in a world where good fruits would have to be cultivated, and only weeds and thorns and disagreeable things would grow of their own accord. Whatever was good must be wished for, and struggled for, and cared for. They had to live by the sweat of their brow.

‘OH, THAT I WERE AS IN MONTHS
PAST.’

It is on that day of banishment from the garden that most readers begin to sympathise with Adam and Eve. If they had always lived in the garden and been always happy and, as it were, unconscious, not having to *take thought* about things, we should care little about them. People who have no trouble and have never done wrong do not need our sympathy any more than fairies or angels. But people who have a home of some sort, but one which they well know is not a Paradise, which is not so perfect as it should be or as complete as they hoped it would be; people who know that Paradise is a long way off, and have to content themselves with a tolerable home in a less romantic spot—these have our sympathy. Many stories have been written about Adam and Eve,

but those come most closely home to our imagination that deal with their history when the first golden days were over and they lived amid toil and trouble. (Read Grimm’s story ‘The Children of Eve.’)

‘LO, CHILDREN ARE AN HERITAGE OF
THE LORD.’

They lived amid toil and trouble. But when their first child Cain was born they almost thought they were in Paradise again. And the good mother, Eve, sang the first of all the nativity songs. It contained the germ of the song that Hannah sang a long time after (see *I Sam.* ii. 1-10); it was set in the same key as the song of Mary, that *Magnificat* sung in our churches still, and sung in the hearts of good mothers whenever the firstborn child comes into the world. It must have been a quiet humming song, with no loud noise and accompaniments, when Eve sang ‘I have gotten a man from the Lord’; but there was a depth of joy in it like that which the great musician has set himself to express in the chorus, ‘Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.’

It was sung over again when Abel was born. With these two little ones about them Adam and Eve would surely never sigh for Paradise; their Paradise would be where their children were.

THE BEGINNING OF DISCORD.

’Tis sad to think that this second Paradise was to be marred like the

first. The brothers were not in sympathy. They did not agree. We do not know why; yet though it is far from uncommon for children of the same family to quarrel, it seems so uncanny and so unkindly that we always wonder why it is, and try to find a reason. It seems that wickedness, like goodness, is a mystery; there is something in it beyond the power of reason to understand.

An old, old story says that Eve had a dreadful dream about the two sons quarrelling, and that she mentioned the matter to Adam, and that to keep them apart they were put at different occupations. I have no doubt that Eve dreamed; she would see enough indications of wrong feeling by day to harass her imagination by night.

But whether the two boys got on ill together from the first, or whether only when they were old enough to work and be envious and jealous did the ill-feeling begin, we cannot tell. But there are homes even yet where the one thing wanting is that the members of the family should know how to 'get on' with each other, how to give way mutually and silently; and, as a matter of course, how to subordinate tiny questions of supposed *rights* to the family peace, and to that family affection which is the greatest right of all. These boys, or one of them, did not know that. And so Adam the father grew sadder and sterner by day, and Eve the mother looked more fretful and worried, as fathers and mothers do now when

their children are jealous and quarrelsome and angular.

Then by and by came the great disaster. We do not know the particulars, but there was one day a quarrel, a struggle, and then a death. Abel had been slain. That was the wreck of the new home.

Those who first told the story thought that the feeling of jealousy caused the first murder (see *Heb. xi. 4*). For they said that when Cain and Abel both offered sacrifices, though Cain as elder led the way, only Abel's and not his were accepted; for he was proud and unthankful. And there was, they said, a threatening look on Cain's brow, the mark of envy and resentment. 'Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen?' said to him a Heavenly voice. 'If *thou* doest well, thou too shalt be accepted, and lift up thy face' (in glad confidence like that of Abel). 'If not, sin awaits thee at the door.'

Sin awaited him and seized him, for after the unheeded warning followed the great crime. Then the story tells us how Heaven itself reproved Cain's cruel deed; and how he went forth from this time with a mark upon his brow; and yet how he went forth to labour and to live, to build new houses as homes and workshops for men. But wherever he went the mark was always upon him. It was the mark of one who had wrecked a home, and desolated human life. It was the work of one for whom the thanksgiving song had been uttered, but who had belied the

promise of that day, and turned the song of rejoicing into a funeral ode.

The first Biblical Home, then, is this scene in which a home is broken up by evil passion. One out of touch with Heaven's kindly Providence, cultivating sullenness and not thankfulness, and resentment instead of brotherliness, murders his home, as Macbeth murdered sleep when he profaned the silent hours with wrong.

'BE NOT OVERCOME WITH EVIL, BUT
OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD.'

It is not a cheerful page, this story in the first chapters of the Bible; but may it not be salutary? For homes are even yet destroyed by the vices that wrecked the first one. The art of home-making and home-preserving is the art of sympathy; it is that which teaches us to rejoice in each other's welfare, to sympathise with each other's grief, to check the beginnings of selfishness and sullenness, to be kindly in our dealings with our fellows, just and lowly in our estimate of ourselves. Even then our home may not be a Paradise; but whatever happens it will not be a ruin; something of that which is most home-like and human will be there, in the day of sorrow, or in the night of death.

If none were sick and none were sad,
What service could we render?
I think, if we were always glad,
We scarcely could be tender.

Did our beloved never need
Our patient ministrations,
Earth would grow cold and miss, indeed,
Its sweetest consolation.

THE HOME OF JACOB AND ESAU.

Gen. xxiv. xxv. 27 ff.; xxvii. See
Heb. xii. 16.

'Thou shalt surely open thine hand unto thy brother.'—*Deut.* xv. 11.

'Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainties.'—*Prov.* xxiii. 6.

'Whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?'—*I. John* iii. 17.

'What fruit, then, had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.'—*Rom.* vi. 21.

THE PATRIARCH ABRAHAM.

OUR subject is the Home of Jacob and Esau. To begin at the beginning one should tell the legend of their grandfather Abraham. He was the man whom God called out of the land of the Chaldees to go out not knowing where he went, but who, guided by Providence, found his way to Canaan. He was the man who, having a son dear to him, named Isaac, was about to kill him as a sacrifice to God, when he heard a heavenly voice commanding him to do the lad no harm; his *willingness* to sacrifice whatever Heaven required should be accepted as righteousness, and the lad could go free. A grand, faithful man was Abraham, capable of great mistakes, but not capable of wilful injustice, as was proved by his conduct towards his

nephew Lot, whose story we have not space to tell (see *Gen.* xiii. 5-13).

THE ROMANCE OF ISAAC'S MARRIAGE.

Abraham's son Isaac was the father of Jacob and Esau. There is a little romance told about the way in which Isaac met with Rebekah their mother. When Abraham was already quite aged, and believed he would not live long, he was anxious that before his death his son Isaac should be blessed with a suitable wife. He was then living among the Hittites in the south of Canaan, near Hebron, but he was particularly anxious that Isaac should not be connected by marriage with these people. And he therefore sent away his head-steward Eliezer, giving him rich presents and proper credentials to carry, that he might go to Mesopotamia, the land between the Euphrates and the Tigris, and from there bring back a wife for Isaac from the kinsfolk of Abraham, who lived there. And we are told what prayer this trusty servant made for his master Abraham's sake, and by what sign he asked the Lord to let him know that he had found the right lady; and how he found her drawing water at a well, and asked her to give him to drink; and how she responded so graciously, offering to supply him with water for his camels and his cattle, that he decided in his mind that this must be the woman that God and his master had sent him to find. And how he was asked in and made welcome, and how he then told his errand, and how Rebekah's brother Laban

and her father Bethuel both agreed with him that it was God who had guided him thither for his master Abraham's sake; and how, with all sorts of congratulations and greetings, Eliezer returned to Abraham, taking with him Rebekah as a wife for Isaac.

Isaac, meantime, a quiet passive man who let the world go on very much its own way without his interference, was enjoying his usual evening's meditation in the field, when he saw caravans and cattle—a long procession—coming towards him; and though hitherto this matter had been managed without him, he was sufficiently excited to break off his meditation and go forward and inquire the news. Eliezer told him his adventures and his success, and that he had brought the lady home with him. Isaac acquiesced in his quiet way in all these arrangements, and the marriage took place.

THE TWO SONS.

Esau and Jacob, the children of this marriage, were twin brothers. But they were utterly unlike in character. Esau, who was the elder, was as simple and straightforward and unpretending as his father, but rougher in appearance and much more vigorous in his actions. His father always had a liking for him because his was an out-of-door healthy nature, such as Isaac always admired; probably, too, the father admired that dash and audacity which he himself had never been able to display. A timid man often likes to hear of adventures;

a hesitating man likes a man of decision.

Jacob, on the other hand, was the favourite of his mother. He was as quiet as Isaac his father, and home-abiding in much the same way. But he was not like his father and his brother—open-hearted and true. A certain tendency to deceit, together with a constant habit of keeping his own counsel while he planned for his own interests, seem to have been inherited from his mother.

JACOB'S MOTHER.

One wonders whether the readiness of Rebekah his mother to accept Eliezer's interpretation of Providence was not largely founded on the perception that it would be *a good stroke of worldly business* for her to become the wife of Abraham's son. In any case Jacob, who learned his manners and morals from his mother, was a selfish, calculating lad. He was not without many elements of good in his character, for he was quiet, studious, and persevering; but was unscrupulous and unbrotherly. Rash and uncalculating Esau enjoyed his life, for he took each day's enjoyment as it came, and thought very little either of the gains or the troubles of the future. On the other hand, Jacob's smallest performances had something of scheming in them.

AN UNSCRUPULOUS BARGAIN.

Thus one day, when his brother was away, Jacob prepared a particularly tempting dish of lentils, cooked and

seasoned in perfectly right proportions. By and by, as had doubtless happened before, Esau came home tired and almost starving from his sports in the field. 'Let me have some of that red stuff you have there,' said Esau. 'Very well,' said Jacob. 'Sell me your birthright, and let the right of the elder belong to me, and you shall have it.' It was a monstrous price. But Esau was impatient and too tired to consider. 'What is the use of a birthright to a man dying for food?' said he. 'Let me have the pottage.' So the bargain was made, and Jacob was reckoned as the elder from that day.

ESAU A 'PROFANE PERSON.'

It is curious that when reference is made in the Bible to this story it is always the rashness and frivolity of Esau which are condemned, and not the merciless unbrotherly conduct of Jacob. We shall understand that point of view better if we remember, first, that the right of the elder with our own forefathers as well as with the Israelites was regarded with a superstitious reverence. Our English laws of inheritance still bear strong traces of this reverence. Secondly, that it is still not uncommon to find people with whom unthriftiness, or 'shiftlessness,' seems the one inexcusable fault. That a man for the sake of saving himself an hour or two of suffering should impoverish himself for life, that is, with them, the maddest thing. Such a man deserves no mercy. It is the only experience that will bring him to his

senses. This is an exaggerated view, but it is a view which could find much support in the Bible.

JACOB'S ABOMINABLE DECEIT.

Jacob persisted in the same conduct. No story in the Old Testament is better known, or is in its way more pathetic, than the story of the fraud by which Jacob deceived his aged father Isaac in order to get from him the blessing intended for his brother Esau. Knowing that Esau had gone out to hunt in order to prepare the food that his father loved, that Isaac might speak a prophetic blessing over him, Jacob, prompted by his own mother, disguises himself that to the half-benumbed senses of his father he may pass for his brother; and declares that he is Esau, and that he has brought the food so quickly because God has helped him.

Trembling with suspicion caused by the sound of the voice, Isaac at length believes the protestations, and promises Jacob the greatest imaginable blessings; and Jacob has hardly hurried out from his father's presence when Esau comes in, and the deceived father is awakened to the fraud practised upon him. Esau cries with an exceeding bitter cry, but it is vain. The word has passed the father's lips and cannot be recalled. When at length in answer to Esau's importunity he essays to bless him also, he can only promise him to live by his sword, and in time to cast off the authority of his brother.

DEAD-SEA FRUIT.

Jacob was successful; but it was a bitter success. The mother who prompted the deceit now found it necessary to counsel Jacob to flee lest Esau should take his life. The brothers did not meet for many years. When they met, Esau's magnanimity was equal to his former rashness. Jacob came to him with presents and prostrations, for Esau had become a great chieftain, and had it well in his power to avenge old wrongs. It was not in his nature. He frankly forgave Jacob, and the brothers parted friends.

Jacob's history and Esau's cannot here be carried further. Nor need many words be added to the story. But as these lessons are studies in the art of making and marring homes one may be allowed to note these

LESSONS :

1. In order to have a happy home, a quiet, meditative man should have a virtuous and truthful wife. Isaac might profitably have made inquiries on his own account.

2. If it is a sin to be rash and shiftless, it is still more hateful to be unbrotherly and deliberately selfish. To toss away one's possessions needlessly is to expose oneself to hardships which need not have been endured; but to gain possessions by fraud or mercilessness is to turn a blessing into a curse; it is to make the wine of life a spiritual poison. Long years of suffering would hardly eradicate the

evil contracted in Jacob's mind on the day of the great deceit.

3. Genuine unpretending forgiveness, when brotherliness outlives resentment, blesses him who grants and him who receives it. It is mightiest in the mightiest.

THE HOME OF JEPHTHAH.

See *Judges* xi.

'The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner.'

Ps. cxviii. 22.

'And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said Abraham . . . Lay not thine hand upon the lad . . . for now I know that thou fearest God.'

Gen. xxii. 11-12.

'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, And who shall stand in His holy place?

He that hath clean hands and a pure heart . . . and hath not sworn deceitfully.'

Ps. xxiv. 3-4.

'A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.'

Isa. liii. 3.

JEPHTHAH'S NATIVE LAND.

It was not a comfortable home, the home of Jephthah, although it was a home in which the material elements of prosperity were not lacking. A healthy mountainous region, a bracing vigorous climate, a country whose rugged features were just sufficiently softened by delightful streams and fertile strips of meadow-land: it was an excellent place to live in, that country on the eastern side of Jordan. We are told that when the Israelitish tribes came out of Egypt and were

seeking a resting-place in Canaan, some of the tribes were so delighted when they came to the land of Gilead that they did not want to pass over Jordan into the promised country at all. 'This is good enough for us here, where we are,' said the elders of Gad and Reuben. 'This is suitable for the free open life we like to lead. It is a place for people who live by cattle grazing, rather than by digging the land, and that suits us. Let us stay here.' 'Very well,' said Moses. 'But if you stay here you will have to pass over Jordan to help your brethren to a settlement on the other side. Help them to fight their battles and then you may return hither if you will.' 'Certainly,' said Gad and Reuben, 'we will do our part in the general strife, but let us claim this country for ourselves;' and thus the matter was settled. The armed men of Gad and Reuben only crossed the Jordan in order to help the other tribes, they returned, as agreed beforehand, to make Gilead their permanent home. And north of their settlement, from the river Jabbok nearly to the lake of Chinnereth, so famous in New Testament times as the 'Sea of Galilee,' a part of the tribe of Manasseh found a dwelling-place. So the story is told in the book of Numbers. And although the stories in the books of Exodus and Numbers are not exactly history, they give us some indication of the opinions of those Israelites who were most enlightened and influential. We learn therefore that Gilead was considered to be in effect part of the Holy Land,

and that it was for a pastoral people a most desirable residence.

A SON OF GILEAD.

Jephthah then, in that period of unrest and disorder, but also of gradual progress, known as the time of the Judges, was an inhabitant of Gilead. 'Gilead begat him,' the Bible says; that is 'he was a true son of Gilead,' a typical and genuine Gilead man. People from outside who could look at things in an unprejudiced manner would have selected Jephthah as just an excellent specimen of a Gileadite. But curiously he was the very man to be banished as a spurious and doubtful son. His brothers would have nothing to do with him. He was only half-brother to them, for his mother was a foreign woman. His blood was tainted. He did not belong to the pure stock. 'He is no heir with us,' said his brothers. Moral and religious prejudice came to the aid of selfish considerations.

A BANISHED SON.

It was of no use for Jephthah to contest the point. Public opinion would justify the brothers. He was pushed out from the home where he had long been less than welcome, and, true son of Gilead though he was, he had to begin afresh, as if he had belonged to no one, and had no responsibilities or affections. The other brothers would be relieved when he was gone, and would hardly feel a qualm when

the strongest, bravest, most capable of them all had left them, perhaps to re-appear some day as an enemy, in any case no longer to be with them as friend and comrade.

He went away and a number of 'vain men' with him. The locality of Tob to which he directed his steps is not certain. It is sometimes supposed to be the same as the 'land of Tubias' in 1 *Maccabees* v., and to be a district a few miles south-east of Galilee.

AT THE HEAD OF THE GOOD-FOR-NOTHINGS

He went away to what was practically a foreign land, having with him some of those luckless unsettled men who, having no means and no character to lose, are always ready for enlistment in any cause that seems likely to bring them either gain or glory. Many of them would have seen enough of Jephthah to feel quite sure that in some way or other he would be heard of again. David had just such a set about him when he fled from Saul, and when being in straits for food he sent to demand tribute from Nabal, and was preparing to make a raid upon him for his refusal, when Nabal's wife interposed and prevented the threatened mischief. Much in the same lawless manner in which David made his raids and depredations, and for much the same reason, that being outlawed he did not feel the ordinary restraints of law or scruples of conscience, Jephthah lived till the day when he should be avenged drew near.

THE PRODIGAL BROTHERS.

Whether is it easier to say 'You shall not share with us, for you are no brother of ours,' or to say 'We are perfectly able to do without you, now and always'? That was the problem which Jephthah's brothers had to solve, and the solution has been forced upon families and institutions and nations in many ways and in many times. The heretic thrust out from the 'true church' as no genuine brother, may be the very man required to save that special branch of the church from destruction.

While Jephthah had been learning the work of a ruler and commander by the exercise of authority over a land of wild and characterless men, his brothers had been feeling the need of one with the gifts of an able warrior. They bore the raids of the Ammonites, representatives of the tribes who had been dispossessed, till they could endure them no longer. At last they had courage to face the disagreeable truth. There was no man among them equal to the task required, but their one hope was to send for their banished brother, and a deputation was sent to Jephthah. He had kept himself informed no doubt of what was going on, and knew what he meant to do. But he was not to be too easily taken. 'Did you not drive me out of my father's house, how can you turn to me? If I come again, and fight the children of Ammon, and heaven give me success, shall I be the head man of the house, and thus chief

ruler of the people?' And in reply they swore this to him loyally.

CONSCIOUS STRENGTH AND CONSCIOUS WORTH.

The negotiations between Jephthah and the Ammonites are excellent reading. It is good to hear the outlawed chief returned to his own, asking his adversary in the name of the community, but with special and peculiar emphasis, 'What hast thou to do with me that thou art come against me to fight in *my land*'? 'Take to thee,' said Jephthah, 'that which Chemosh thy God gives thee, and leave to us what Jehovah has given to us.' We need not think of this as a gross and idolatrous conception, it certainly made the god-head to consist of several *persons*, but the phraseology of Jephthah indicates a belief in a superintending Providence, and hints that men should be loyal to the decrees of the gods. He himself was prepared so to be loyal. But he believed that prayers and offerings would affect heaven's decrees. And hence, that success might be made doubly sure, he promises as a thank-offering to Jehovah, whatsoever should come first to meet him as he should return from the victory over Ammon. And the story tells us that Jephthah won a great victory, and captured twenty towns, and utterly defeated the Ammonites. And then returning triumphantly home, the first to meet him was *his own daughter*, with a train of girls carrying tambourines and dancing their way along in songs of rejoicing.

JEPHTHAH'S SINCERITY.

Jephthah never juggled with words. He did not pretend that he had not meant a human being, or that a slave might be substituted instead of his daughter, or some lesser creature instead of a slave. He did not either to God or men keep a promise in the letter and break it in the spirit. He saw what he had done. He had purchased victory with his daughter's blood, and it was but the more awful that she in all simplicity, and with loyalty like his own, and with meekness special to herself, offered herself readily to die. 'Let me have two months to bewail my untimely fate and then the vow shall be paid.' In hurried words the historian tells us this was done, and the thing became an annual celebration.

The story of Jephthah, is it not the story of a *homeless* man? A man simple-hearted and brave, but destined in early days to be driven from an uncomfortable home in which he never had his true place allowed; to be recalled later and to gain scope and more than scope for all he could be and all he could do; but then by his own rashness, and for the want of a warning voice, like that which came to Abraham, to ruin the home that he might have enjoyed, and to close his days in gloom deeper than the gloom in which they began.

One of those men to whom God has not given happiness, but something greater than happiness, a courageous

spirit, and a faithful, loyal soul, such was Jephthah—let us not lament, not condemn, but silently admire him.

THE HOME OF MICAH.

Judges xvii.-xviii.

See *Matt. v. 23-24. Prov. i. 10-19.*

'Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.'—*Prov. iii. 29.*

'To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.'—*Prov. xxi. 3.*

'When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to trample my courts? When ye make many prayers I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes.'—*Isaiah i. 12, 15, 19.*

Saying above: 'Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou wouldest not. . . . Then said he, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. *He taketh away the first that he may establish the second.*'—*Heb. x. 8-9.*

It is said by the learned in such matters that the story of Micah, like most of the stories in the Old Testament, is not the work of a single author. Little additions, it is said, have been made to the original narrative, and have given it a somewhat different turn from that which the first writer intended. For our present purpose the whole story may be taken as the last editor left it, except in regard to one name which will be mentioned by and by.

THE HEROIC DAYS.

The legend belongs to those interesting days when there was no king in Israel. It was a period of which there was very little certain history, but concerning which many heroic stories were told, and to which many old war songs were attributed.

THE THEFT (*Prov.* xxviii. 24).

This is the substance of the history. There was a man in the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Micah. Of him we know only this: that he lived with his mother who was a woman of some wealth; and at one time he acted so unworthily as secretly to steal a bag of money from her amounting to eleven hundred pieces of silver. (The exact weight intended must be a matter of conjecture.) His mother was greatly upset at the loss of these shekels, never dreaming where they had gone, and uttered a fierce malediction against the unknown thief who had taken the money. It was not, perhaps, this wicked wish which at length worked upon the young man's mind. He seems rather to have had, by and by, a sincere desire to become a truly pious man, believing, according to the general teaching of the best men he knew, that prosperity would be the lot of the righteous and punishment the fate of the wicked. (Read the First Psalm.) He therefore one day frankly confessed his fault, told his mother it was he who had taken the money, and immediately fetched the shekels and

weighed them down to his mother. His mother was so delighted that she did not need to utter the word forgiveness. She immediately blessed him as vehemently as formerly—without knowing it—she had cursed him. She then declared that she had always intended to put the money to a religious use, and accordingly part of the sum restored was devoted to the purchase of household gods; they are called several times 'a graven image and molten image.' The exact form was more important to the writer of the story or to his editor than it is to us. They were not gods which it was considered wrong to make. For Micah meant to be a thoroughly good man. He had a sort of chapel for worship attached to his house, and because there was no proper member of the priestly order in his neighbourhood, he made one of his sons his priest, and felt his conscience at rest.

THE BLESSING OF A GENUINE PRIEST.

He felt himself particularly fortunate, however, when in the course of his wanderings a young fellow belonging to the priestly order, a Levite, happened to call that way. Either his sins or his misfortunes had sent the young man on his travels well-nigh penniless, and he was glad to accept the terms offered by Micah—ten shekels in money, his food and lodging, and a suit of clothes every year. Micah was as well pleased as the Levite. In truth, everything seemed to favour him. He was already a

prosperous man, and with this genuine Levite to offer his sacrifices and perform intercessions for him he believed that God was bound to bless him. Just so in later times the Pharisee who had fasted twice in the week and paid his tithes considered that he had *paid* for a blessing that could hardly be withheld.

THE RAIDERS.

This comfortable feeling was destined to be rudely disturbed; for, not long after the settlement of this genuine Levite whose ministrations were so comforting to the mind of Micah, a band of lawless men travelled to Mount Ephraim. They were a company of Danites, who finding their settlement on the Philistine border not wide enough, or not uncontested, were seeking a new settlement further north. They were a set of reckless, unscrupulous adventurers who happened to pass near the quiet home and estate of Micah. It does not speak well for the antecedents of Micah's priest that they seem to have known him previously. 'What are you doing here?' they said. 'And how much do you get a year for that?' they asked again. And, one thing at a time, the priest told them all about the arrangement he had made with Micah.

ASKING AN ORACLE.

It is curious and instructive to read that this priest 'inquired of the Lord' for them. Exactly how this inquiry

was made we cannot tell. Certain images would be used corresponding to the things called 'Urim and Thummin,' which were in use for the same purpose many generations later than the period of the Judges; but we do not know the method of procedure. In some way this priest obtained an answer, which, though it was ambiguous and indefinite, would do very well for men whose minds were already made up. 'Go in peace,' said the priest; 'before the Lord is your way wherein ye go.' It might have been as much as this unfaithful priest's life was worth to have given them a worse answer; for the very men who were superstitious enough to wish to have the sanction of these household gods for their enterprise would believe, not without good grounds, that the priest himself was able to manage so as to get a right response. He sanctioned their scheme. They went off and found what they required—a good strip of territory that by violence could be taken from its quiet and unsuspecting possessors.

At a time which may or may not have been pre-arranged with this Levite, they returned with a great band of armed men; told the priest to shut his mouth and come with them. 'We want a priest,' they said. 'With us you will be priest for a whole colony; we will do better for you than this man can do.' With the Levite's aid they took Micah's religious establishment entirely away;

the household gods, the ephod, and whatever was used in worship and for 'inquiring of the Lord,' together with the knavish priest himself, were well on the way before honest Micah knew what had happened.

MICAH'S BEREAVEMENT.

Micah was not only indignant, he was terrified when he discovered what had taken place. Arming his menservants as best he might, he set forth with them to follow the robbers. When at last he overtook them, he shouted to them to halt. 'What do you want?' impudently asked the Danite robbers. 'What do I want?' said Micah. 'You have taken away my gods and the ephod, and have taken the priest with you, and have left me nothing of them all, and do you ask what I want, and what is the matter?' 'You had better keep quiet,' shouted one of the armed robbers; 'if not, some of our men will come and make you quiet.' And then the betrayed and robbed Micah saw that their party was immeasurably stronger than his, and that there was nothing for it but to return disconsolately home. He went back again in sadness akin to despair. They went off to found a colony, the land of which they raided from quieter people, and the religious establishment of which was stolen from the honest and unoffending Micah. Such, says the story, was the origin of the city of Dan, noted in after days as one of the two cities in which Jeroboam, son of Nebat, set up the golden image

(*I. Kings* xii. 28, 29). And a most curious statement is added at the close of the story that a grandson of Moses became a priest at the city of Dan so established, and that the same family continued in the office till the time of the captivity. This statement caused such offence to readers and copyists that the name Moses was altered to Manasseh by a marginal correction. The implications of the story concerning the city of Dan and concerning the grandson of Moses need not now be considered.

THE TROUBLES OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

But let us think of the man Micah. Here is a man who begins his moral and religious reformation by making all right and true between himself and his mother; who worships God according to the best light he has, and worships more perfectly as soon as it is possible. He believes in all sincerity that nothing but good can be the result of so virtuous a life. And suddenly, with no fault on his side, he finds that his priest has betrayed him, his household gods have deserted him; he is left, religiously speaking, houseless and forsaken. What can he do but despair? At first, perhaps, nothing; he would be perfectly bewildered. Gradually we may hope that he learned that nothing of true and lasting value had been stolen. The priest was gone, but he was a bad, faithless man whom it were better to be without. The 'graven and molten image' was gone, but it was but a

dead thing. It had been his, and now was theirs, and had no living power for anybody.

PERPLEXED, YET NOT UNTO DESPAIR.

But the honest endeavour to do right; the true instinct that made him first of all do right by his own mother; and the faith that True Blessedness belongs to the Righteous—these could not be stolen from him. They would be more and more precious to him when his useless religious apparatus had been taken, and his faithless priest had left him. We may hope that in no long time he would learn to be a wiser, and yet not a sadder man. The home, which had been happy since he began to do right, would be happy still, because the love of right and the desire to worship God and keep His commandments would still be there, and where these are there must be home. As to the robbers and their faithless priest, they might set up a religious establishment, they might offer sacrifices and make ‘inquiries’ of the Lord; but from a tree planted in such corruption no good fruit could possibly grow. They were not seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and therefore the best blessings could not be added unto them. Nothing but a degrading superstition can be the religion of those who have not learned what Micah had learned long before, that one should begin his religious reform by making himself an honest and honourable man.

THE HOME OF JONATHAN.

Read *I. Sam.* xviii. Learn *II. Sam.* i. 19 ff.

SAUL THE WARRIOR-HERO.

A PATHETIC story is the history of Jonathan's father, the first king of Israel. Saul the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin—a warlike little tribe of good reputation—was a man who had just the qualities required in the days of the Judges, but lacked those which would have made him a successful king. He was good-looking, well-built, very tall and strong. He was generous, prompt, enthusiastic, brave; in short, he was an admirable man for a leader and a warrior. The story of his victory over Nahash the Ammonite in the war undertaken on behalf of Jabesh-Gilead makes one of the most interesting pages in the historical annals of Israel.

THE INSULTING TERMS OF NAHASH.

Nahash would make no terms with the leaders of Gilead, unless they would give themselves unconditionally into his hands, that he might before freeing them thrust out their right eyes, that their mutilated faces might bear witness to every man who met them that they had been enslaved and insulted, and owed their spared lives to contempt and not compassion. Saul, roused at these terms, gathered men together and gained a complete victory over the enemy, fulfilling pretty literally the proverb which

said that the tribe of Benjamin devoured the prey in the morning and divided the spoil at night (*Genesis* xlix. 27); for in one day the Ammonite army was annihilated, those who were not slain being driven wildly from the field.

It is pleasant to learn that this piece of unselfish valour on Saul's part was rewarded with the lasting gratitude of the men of Jabesh, who remembered him with affection in his darkest days.

THE NEED FOR UNITY.

About this time Saul was made king,—whether before or after that event is hardly certain, for the stories are not given us in chronological order. The tribes had been long feeling their want of cohesion. They were never free from invasion. Ammonites, Moabites, Amorites harassed them by turns; but, more than all, the Philistines on the coast often held the tribes near to them in practical slavery. They disarmed them, and forbade them even to sharpen their own agricultural implements lest they should by the same means sharpen blades to be used for warfare.

'We are not bound together,' said the representative men. 'We are only single tribes. We ought to become a nation under one king, then if one tribe were attacked all the others would have to rally to its defence, and we should become a strong independent people.' The same argument

had been used before, and had been answered with scornful ridicule (*Judges* ix. 7 ff). But now the popularity of Saul bore down all opposition. The general voice of the people chose him. The prophet Samuel anointed him; and so strong was the feeling in his favour that those who asked 'What was Benjamin that it should give a king to all the tribes?' or, 'Who was Saul's father that his son should reign?' were counted as good-for-nothings—sons of Belial whose opinion need not be considered. That which only a generation ago it was considered a profanity to propose, namely, the election of a king, had now become the universal demand; and those were deemed the unpatriotic and disloyal who hesitated and criticised.

SAUL AS KING.

It was a sad day for Saul, however, and for Jonathan his son, when he was made king. He reigned very well for a long time. His popularity continued for a time unabated. People liked his manliness and modesty, his frankness and his impulsive spirit. They told with pleasure how this brave king, once meeting a band of prophets, visionary enthusiastic young religionists, with music and various excitements, forgot his dignity and joined the exercises of these religionists, giving rise to the saying, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?'

But the Israelites were a headstrong moody race, difficult to hold well to-

gether. Saul's popularity began after a time to wane.

SAMUEL AND SAUL.

And, unfortunately, the prophet Samuel was among those who were dissatisfied and disappointed. What was the cause of the estrangement between him and the king it is hard to say. Stories told by those unfavourable to Saul could allege nothing worse than that he offered public sacrifices once without waiting for the prophet; or that after a war with the Amalekites he spared some of the booty that should have been destroyed, and some of the prisoners that should have been killed. Nothing worse and nothing more definite. But things began to go wrong with Saul. He had no diplomacy, no art of concealment, no art of pleasing opposite parties at once, no cunning. Worse than that, he lost the art of patience and self-control. Then began woeful days for his son Jonathan.

THE KING'S SON AND HIS SON-IN-LAW.

He was a loyal and noble son. But in the days when the sun of prosperity was beginning to be clouded Jonathan's lot was most unhappy. His father began to grow morose, suspicious, unjust. This temper of mind displayed itself in frantic suspicions directed against his son-in-law David. If old legends tell true, David was at first only hired by Saul as court-minstrel in order to divert the king from melancholy thoughts. But the young harper

grew into manhood. He became an able warrior. His ambition led him to seek and obtain the hand of Saul's daughter Michal in marriage. Jonathan was intensely fond of him. But Saul hated him more and more day by day. No one can tell how long this state of things continued. But as long as it endured Jonathan's home life was a tragedy. David's wildest dreams of ambition were roused by Saul's very suspicions; while their ultimate aim was furthered by the trusty, unsuspecting friendship and genuine admiration of Jonathan. Thus, on the one hand, King Saul, to whom his son Jonathan was ever loving and true, was resentful, sullen, at times boisterous and half-insane with suspicion. On the other hand David, Jonathan's dearest friend, for whose sake he would bear his own father's irritation and abuse, was surely, even if not intentionally, justifying Saul's worst suspicions; was undermining Jonathan's position by making himself more than heir to Saul's popularity—that is, by so 'going in and out before the people,' that Jonathan was likely in some critical moment to be supplanted and forgotten.

A PASSIONATE FRIENDSHIP.

The love of David and Jonathan is a story that has become immortalized. It was no easy sing-song sentimentality. It was nothing less than a passion on Jonathan's part. It grew at first out of the admiration of the plain man for one of more complex character and

diverse talents; in the sequel it was a combination of the hero-worship which was excited by David's marvellous talents with the sympathy which was caused by Saul's violent dislike. For years it went on. When David was driven away Jonathan met him secretly and befriended him; when danger threatened him Jonathan let him know. The king, whose troubles aged him prematurely, divined it all, and suffered the more; for he loved his son while he hated his son's friend. Space fails just here to tell how sad the latter days of Saul became. But be it said that to the very end two noble passions remained with him bright and clear—his love for his country and his love for his son.

THE ANGEL OF DEATH WAS KINDLY.

It was fitting that both Saul and the son, whom he loved, but whose future, after all his care, and partly on account of that care looked so doubtful, should die side by side in battle. Gloriously they died in a battle against the most formidable of Israel's foes, the Philistines. It was better so. Had Jonathan lived, David's conduct towards him might have made a painful chapter to read. But dying most timely, the friendship which had cost so much was never broken, never profaned. The dirge over Saul and Jonathan was written, sung, and disseminated by David himself. Not altogether trusty and true himself, David appreciated these virtues where he saw them, and he was not insincere when he said:

'I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan;
Very pleasant hast thou been to me;
Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the
love of woman.'

That may well be the last word. Jonathan's friendship for David was like that of Antonio for Bassanio (in *The Merchant of Venice*)—a love: that rare passion which makes one man ready to lay down either his life or his life's greatest blessings, as the case may be, for the sake of some other man.

Jonathan was literally too good for this world. Had he not died early his lack of worldly wisdom would have met its due recompense—lack of worldly success. That would still be just; for the most spiritual and virtuous of beings are subject to the ordinary laws.

But he passed early to that home where worldly wisdom is not needed, and left his pure unsullied fame to shine, as a perfect ray of light, in a history elsewhere dark with human folly and crime.

He was 'a faithful friend,' such as the wise Son of Sirach had in mind when he wrote (*Ecclesiasticus* vi. 14-16):—'A Faithful Friend is a strong defence, and he that hath found him hath found a treasure. There is nothing that can be taken in exchange for a Faithful Friend, and his excellency is beyond price. A Faithful Friend is a medicine of life, and they that fear the Lord shall find him.'

THE HOME LIFE OF JESUS.

Read *Luke* ii. 40 ff.

‘Honour thy father and thy mother.’—

Exod. xx. 12.

‘If thou criest after knowledge,
And lift up thy voice for understanding,
If thou seek her as silver, and search for
her as for hid treasures,

Then shalt thou understand the fear of
the Lord

And find the knowledge of God.’—

Prov. ii. 3-5.

‘I am become a stranger to my brethren,
And an alien to my mother’s children.’—

Ps. lxix. 8.

‘When my father and my mother forsake me
Then the Lord will take me up.’—

Ps. xxvii. 10.

‘Thou hast loved righteousness and hated
iniquity,

Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.’

Ps. xlv. 7, quoted in *Heb.* i.

It is usually said that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. It was formerly believed that he was bound to be born there in order that a certain ancient prophecy might be fulfilled. In accordance with this belief, stories were told explaining how it came to pass that he who was known as Jesus of Nazareth happened to be born in Bethlehem.¹ We may disregard these stories for the present, and think of the home of Jesus at Nazareth.

NAZARETH.

Those who have been to the town which once contained the home of

¹ Strictly this applies only to the story given in St. Luke. That in St. Matthew attempts rather to explain how it was that he who was born in Bethlehem happened to dwell in Nazareth. The stories do not accord in their foundation any more than in their superstructure.

Jesus, tell us that it is still one of the pleasantest spots in the Holy Land.

We may think of it as an unpretentious little town of perhaps three thousand inhabitants. The town itself is not beautiful, and like most towns built in the neighbourhood of delightful hills and valleys, is put together without any special regard to the charming scenery around. But a walk of but a few minutes’ distance brings one where the scenery cannot be missed. The range of hill country terminating in Carmel on one side, the summits of Tabor and Endor on the other, with yet another range of hills in the North, and the beautiful Lake on the East, though not seen yet suggested by the depression that marks the Jordan valley; all these make it as impossible to live without knowing and feeling something of the beauty of nature, as it would be to live without breathing something of the fresh and wholesome air which is the privilege of country life.

EDUCATION OF JESUS.

We cannot read the parables of Jesus, or even his shorter sayings, without perceiving the influence on his thought of the open life of the country. He was familiar with the work of the fields; he talked of sowing and reaping, of harvesting and storing; of birds and flowers, and the weather tokens of the skies; of labourers and idlers, and of children’s games, as one who lived among these things and understood them. He was familiar also with the sacred literature of his people, with the

Law and the Prophets, with the stories of Israel's heroes and kings, with the hymns of Israel's singers. Probably his learning did not extend much beyond these two; he knew the face of nature, he knew the Word of God as understood and spoken by the great men, his countrymen, who had lived before him.

HIS BOYHOOD.

We find no hint in the records we have of Jesus that he ever travelled or wished to travel, or that his studies ever took a wider range than that which was within the reach of any peasant boy of Galilee. The one anecdote that has been preserved of his boyhood's days shows him eager in the pursuit of the one kind of knowledge that was prized in his day, knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. He had longed to be able to talk to those great men—the teachers of the Law; and when at last his opportunity came, and he was taken to Jerusalem, he forgot every other privilege and every other duty for the sake of the unspeakable delight of hearing the wise men who knew (as he supposed) what he did not know, and could solve some of the problems that long had exercised his mind.

When his mother reproved him for having caused pain to his parents he answered to the effect that he supposed that they would surely know where he must be; and with that reply went quietly and willingly home with his parents.

HIS HOME.

What kind of a home was that? It is always understood that the family in which Jesus grew up was poor. (An expression in one of the epistles of Paul that he 'was *rich*' is usually not understood to mean rich in worldly possessions.) Yet the adjective poor might be misleading. One who is as well off as one's neighbours, one who lives as well, is educated as well, enjoys as much freedom as others, and wishes for no more, is not in the ordinary sense of the word poor. As far as we know, Jesus suffered no hardship of poverty till he voluntarily exposed himself to such hardships in the work of teaching. Till then he had led the happy life of one whose work efficiently supplies his needs.

THE FAMILY.

So much invented folly has been talked of the Mother of Jesus and of her husband St. Joseph, that it would be news to many people who yet have often looked into the New Testament, that Jesus was one of a numerous family. He was the son of a carpenter named Joseph and of Mary his wife. It is quite certain that he had brothers and sisters. When his teaching began to give offence it was asked—'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?' Jesus then had four brothers, and probably at least two sisters, whose names are not given.

Whether any of these were older than Jesus, or whether he was literally and not figuratively the first-born of Joseph and Mary is not quite sure. The question has been raised whether the brother James who was in later days the man most revered in the church of Jerusalem (*Acts* xv. 13) may not have been an older brother of Jesus, perhaps a son of Joseph by a previous marriage. It is not necessary to think so. It is more exactly in accordance with the documents before us to believe that the brothers and sisters of Jesus were his own brothers and sisters, and that they were all younger than he.

YET LONELY.

What sort of home life had he among them? The answer is a little disquieting. Neither the mother nor the brothers of Jesus fully understood him, and his inner life was on that account lonely. It is probable, indeed, that much of the goodness and the grace of the life of Jesus came from his mother. (At times there is something almost motherly in the relation of Jesus to his disciples.) And most likely if we knew James and the younger brothers, and the two sisters, as we know Jesus; if we could hear their sayings, and see their daily life only as far as we can hear and see his, we should see the family character in them; we should find that even the least notable among them bore considerable resemblance to the Master. But he was beyond them. There was a *mystery* of goodness in him that they

never quite understood. When the mother and brothers perceived, at one time, that the enthusiasm of Jesus was beyond all bounds, that it was leading him into trouble, and might lead to rioting and violence, they would have persuaded him and even forced him to go home had they found it possible. He felt the dreadful spiritual gap between himself and the family; for, pointing to his *disciples*, he said, 'Behold my mother and my brethren.' It was the severest saying he ever uttered. It implied that the love, the spiritual sympathy which his soul expected from his own family had to be sought amongst the group of friends which his teaching had attracted to him. Peter, and the sons of Zebedee, and a few others like them, made up what was lacking in the love of his own household. I think, therefore, that much earlier than this, before Jesus began his public work at all, something of the want of spiritual sympathy on the part of his mother and brothers, something of an inner loneliness would be felt by Jesus. We have not particulars; may be we are better without them.

MARY NOT 'IMMACULATE.'

But it is curious, and ought to be considered by those who treat St. Mary as a goddess, that whenever the New Testament brings Jesus and his mother before us, we perceive some want of sympathy between them. In the story of the visit of Jesus to the temple, the mother roundly reproves him; in the

parabolic story of the wedding in John's Gospel, Jesus reproves his mother; in the story already alluded to, the mother with his brothers try to get him home; in St. Luke we are told that when someone shouted 'she was a blessed woman who bore thee, and nursed thee at the breast,' Jesus quietly replied, 'Blessed, rather, are those who hear the word of God and keep it.' This last anecdote would hardly furnish evidence if it stood alone: in conjunction with the others it helps to justify the thought that Jesus paid the penalty of greatness by feeling early and persistently the lack of sympathy.

A GOOD FAMILY, BUT NOT PERFECT.

When we think of the home life of Jesus, therefore, we think not of the pains of poverty, for the family did not suffer there, they were content in obscurity. We think not of the alternate wrong-doing and remorse which are the portion of the unfaithful; for this family was a virtuous, faithful family. We think rather of a family kindly, gentle, and but for one circumstance, happy; whose greatest trouble was that one among them was so much greater than the others, his thoughts were so much more profound, his conscience so much more sensitive, his aims so much wider, that they inadvertently added to his sorrows, and increased the burden he was bound to bear. Time was to come when they would be loved and honoured because they were akin to him; when the very

features of his character, which they had failed to read aright, would be read of all men, and he would be named the Saviour of men. It would perhaps, at first, seem more pleasant if we could think of all the children of Joseph and Mary as perfectly simple and good, if they shone upon us like saints from a church-window. But it is better to know that at times they erred, and suffered for their error; at times they failed to understand each other, failed to read the lesson which yet was forcing itself upon them, and suffered for their spiritual dulness. It is through such tribulations, even now, that good people enter into the kingdom of heaven.

THE OLDER BROTHER'S HOME.

Luke xv. 11 ff.

'Fret not thyself because of evil-doers.'
—*Ps.* xxxvii. 1.

'When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful.'—*Rom.* i. 21.

'Fools because of their transgression and because of their iniquities are afflicted: They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saveth them out of their distresses.'—*Ps.* cvii. 17, 19.

'There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'—*Rom.* iii. 22, 23.

THE story told in the fifteenth chapter of *St. Luke*, verses 11-32, is, perhaps, better known than any other story in the Bible. It is told so perfectly that it would be impossible to change the words without

injuring the story. We always speak of it as a Parable. As a Parable it bears its lessons written clearly upon its surface; no one can doubt that it is intended to emphasise: The mercy of God, the possibility and reality of repentance, the unkindliness of the spirit of self-righteousness.

Meantime, the story is not only a parable, it is a sketch from life. It is the kind of thing that did happen in Nazareth and Capernaum; it is the kind of thing that yet happens in towns and villages much nearer to us than the villages and towns of Galilee. Could we dare think out the particulars, filling in those shadings that were not required for the Parable, but which must have belonged to the life?

COMPARE 'THE MILL ON THE FLOSS.'

Then there must have been once a mother to those two boys. She may have gone to her final rest before the younger son's adventure; but she lived long enough to know the difference between the two sons. They differed as Tom and Maggie differed in one of the finest of modern stories. Maggie was always rash, and headstrong, and incalculable, while never wishing to be wicked; and Tom, with many good qualities, had in almost exaggerated degree self-control, and a sentiment of self-respect that kept him safe from blunders, and more than a little inward pride that he had always done well, always had been respectable and respected, that his copy-book had been always clean.

THE DUTIFUL ONE.

Even so the elder of these two brothers (call him Ephraim) had made the family regulations his law. That his father expected a thing to be done was enough. He might not like the doing of it. It might be work unpleasant to do, and as far as he could judge unprofitable when done. That had nothing to do with it. If a boy were to stop to dispute that this was disagreeable, and that was useless, nothing would ever be done promptly or well—that he could understand. He did that which he was required and expected to do. And he was not bitter when it seemed that he had worked hard to little purpose, or when duties came so thick one upon another that there was very little time for relaxation. Only one thing embittered him: that his father, and his mother as long as she lived, allowed the younger one to act so undutifully.

THE UNTHRIFTY SON.

That younger one (call him Japhet) from the beginning was never in the strict sense of the word sensible. It was true that in some things he was clever. He learned to read quicker than others. But what use? He spent the spare time in mischief. He was open-hearted and free. But what use? He gave away that which strictly belonged to his father; and even if it were his own, his father had often to renew the very things that had been one-half idly lost, and the

other half as thoughtlessly given away. Why does not he behave *rightly*? was the question that haunted the mind of the elder brother. And why is he not *made* to act rightly, or at least more severely punished when he does not act rightly? This was the second question that tormented the older brother's mind. He did not ask it openly. For one thing, respect for his father kept him quiet. And, moreover, when one day he began a remonstrance at what seemed to him too great a lenity, there was a sort of shock and astonishment on the countenance of the father that he did not wish again to evoke. It was long before it happened again.

AN ABSURD VENTURE.

When the younger brother grew up he left home. He asked that what would be due to him in the division of the family substance might be given to him now. He was going away, not to return. When he went he told himself that he could have stayed at home content enough, if it were only his father; but that the dictatorial brother, always expecting the impossible, and always intolerant of any one's way of life but his own, was more than he could bear. The elder, blaming in his mind equally the wild designs of the brother who was going, and the soft indulgence of the father who seemed to aid him, was yet relieved when the younger one was gone. Things were *orderly* again. The young fellow's superficial clever-

ness no longer vexed him; his own steadfast virtues seemed to entitle him to be what he wished to be; henceforth he was not the firstborn merely, but the only son.

THE FAMINE.

The younger proved to be as foolish as the most unbrotherly imagination could have conceived. His openness, his cleverness, his temporary wealth, all worked together to attract round him idle companions who wished to be amused, and avaricious and cheating dealers who cared only for profit; and he thought them all good friends. So they were till first the reserves of wealth, and too speedily the resources of wit failed, and then when money and gaiety were gone not a soul remained faithful to encourage the man they had disheartened, or to aid the man they had impoverished.

LOOKING BACK AND—REPENTANCE.

Then he discovered what his older brother long had known—that his cleverness was a sham and a mistake. It was a thing of show and not of strength; it was wasteful, not accumulative; destructive, not productive. It did not enable him to recover wasted wealth or wasted health, it did not even provide the bare necessities of life. Engaged in the meanest, most contemptible of callings, he yet was not able sufficiently to allay even the pangs of hunger. Then it was borne in upon him that he had been a fool: it was not a consoling

thought, but nearer to truth than his thoughts had been for many a day. And now he remembered the aggravated character of his folly; he thought of his home and his undutiful, ungrateful behaviour there; the kindness he always received at the father's hands (a momentary resentful thought concerning his brother's censoriousness had here to be checked); the healthfulness, the sanity of the home that once was his. He says to himself that he has practically *sold* that home, and murdered himself with the proceeds. 'No use,' he says, 'to think. Yet my father's *day-servants* . . . ' It was a decisive suggestion, 'I will arise and go to my father.'

* * * * *

THE MERRY-MAKING.

Pass we over the journey home with its doubts and hesitations, and the speech so carefully prepared, ending *make me as one of thy hired servants*, a request he never had opportunity to speak. For there was nothing but welcome, and joy, and feasting, and music, and life from the dead—till the older brother returned.

THE UNSOCIAL ONE.

The older brother was not of a social make. Dutiful he was; regular and reliable, an embodiment of the commandments, but the commandments were taken piece-meal as individual regulations; they were not understood as parts of a larger whole; it was not understood by him that all other home

duties resolved themselves into these two: 'Thou shalt in respect of thy father act as becomes a son; thou shalt in respect of thy brother, whenever your paths meet, act as becomes an older brother.'

SCORN AND RESENTMENT.

Alas! this strict disciplinarian did neither. Instead of feeling it a great privilege to find there was a merry-making, and mirth, and all signs of holiday, he felt resentment to think folk were happy, and called a servant to *ask what was the matter*. And as soon as he learns, the frown becomes darker upon his brow. *He* is it for whom all this holiday is prepared? The young fellow who never from the first has been dutiful; who has spent his heritage in riot, and who only returns when he is driven back by sheer starvation. 'And I have slaved day after day,' he tells the father; 'and when has there been an hour of festivity on my account?'

It would have been odd if there had been. To have rejoiced with him would have been to rejoice with one whose face was never merry, whose voice was never merry, who never overlooked another's fault or laughed it off, but kept account of it, weighed it, measured it, and drew from it the right to be unsocial and unkindly.

UNWEARIED PATIENCE.

But the father does not remind him of all these things, only tells him that he has always had a home—'Son, thou

art ever with me.' All the treasures of home-life had been constantly open to him. The sociality, the friendliness, the very music and mirth of life had been always accessible; and he—had never enjoyed them. Did he see that he, too, in his own way had been guilty of folly? That his censoriousness and want of cordiality had embittered a life that might without losing aught of dutifulness have gained much in humanity and gentleness?

Some people have doubted whether young Japhet ever really became steady, and home-abiding, and dutiful; we might in the same way doubt whether Ephraim ever learned the tolerance, and forbearance, and manliness which are the virtues of the humble. But that doubt is a faithless one.

GOD IS THE 'SAVIOUR OF ALL MEN.'

If for one single hour the younger behaves as becomes a broken-hearted and loyal son; if for one moment the elder sees that he has after all missed the secret of the perfect life, that he ought to have known that love is the fulfilling of the law—that hour of true enlightenment is a prophecy for both of the better life that shall be. At times the younger will still be tempted to folly and the elder to resentment; but they both have had glimpses of a better way of living, they know henceforth that until they attain that more excellent way they sin against the father's love, and are not worthy to be deemed his children.

THE HOME OF JOHN MARK.

See *Acts* xii., xiii. 1-13, xv. 36-41. *Philemon* 24. *Col.* iv. 10. *II. Tim.* iv. 11. *I. Peter* v. 13.

'When a good man's goings are established of the Lord,
And he delighteth in His way;
Though he fall he shall not lie prostrate,
For the Lord upholdeth his hand.'
Ps. xxxvii. 23-24 (Kirkpatrick).

WE close this series of papers with an attempt to enter into the home-life of John Mark. There are indications in the New Testament—they are noted above—which will tell us what kind of a home he lived in, who were his near relatives, what kind of man he grew up to be, what use he made of his advantages, and for what reason we ought to remember him.

PETER IMPRISONED.

The first thing that we know of him we learn from the twelfth chapter of the Acts. There you will find how a little before King Herod's death (A.D. 44) he, Herod Agrippa, began a persecution against the followers of Jesus. James the son of Zebedee was put to death, and Peter was thrown into prison. Herod Agrippa, a favourite of the reigning Emperor Claudius (A.D. 40-54), seems to have had, or to have usurped, authority to put a man to death, on occasion, without trial. He must have known, too, that the majority of the Jews would be pleased with arbitrary action, so long as it was directed against a little sect

that every one disliked and distrusted. So Peter was expected to be the next victim. The followers of Jesus remembered his words, 'Watch and pray.' No lawful means of defence or flight were neglected; and meantime prayer was made continually for those who were attacked, and for the Kingdom of God. Peter was suddenly released from prison. He himself hardly knew how. In the night a man had touched him on the side, saying, 'Follow me.' His chains came off. He was told to put on his sandals and gird himself for walking. He obeyed mechanically, followed the guide through one gate and another till they came to the city gate, and that opened without apparent signal. Just a street's length further the guide left him. Peter could only believe that all this had been done by an angel.

THE HOUSE OF JOHN MARK.

When he had time to think a moment he decided to go to the house of 'Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark.' Some friends were holding a prayer meeting there at the very time of his arrival. A servant maid named Rhoda went to the door, and, recognising Peter's knock and his voice, was so astounded that she forgot to let him in, and ran back to tell them all that Peter was there. They told her she was crazy to say so. She declared it was true. Peter meanwhile wished very much to go in, and knocked

again. In a moment he was there among them telling his adventure.

So, then, we learn that John Mark's mother was called Mary, that the family lived in Jerusalem, that they were in the very centre of the new movement that had hardly yet got itself a name, but was shortly to be called Christian; that one of the foremost Apostles was quite intimate with the family, and could think of no better place to go to when he was marvellously and unexpectedly released from prison. We are inclined to believe that when at the close of his epistle Peter says (*I. Peter* v. 13), after announcing a salutation from the Church, 'and so does Mark, my son' (salute you), he refers to this same John Mark. It is possible, meanwhile, that Peter was the father of a son Mark, who had been named after the one with whom we have now to do. From Paul's Epistle to the Colossians we learn incidentally that Mark was the cousin of Barnabas.

HIS ADVANTAGES.

Here is a privileged man brought up by a devout mother, intimate with some of those disciples of Jesus who had known the Master most intimately, a near relative, too, of one of the most broad-minded and earnest men of the Jerusalem Church, Barnabas—the man who first welcomed St. Paul into the circle of the disciples, and was afterwards the elder colleague of St. Paul in the first great Christian missionary enterprise. What would we not give for half-an-

hour's conversation with John Mark! He knew the great man to whom, after Jesus, we are indebted for the Christian Church, as intimately as we know our own nearest relatives and friends. He was not unworthy of his privileges.

THE MIXED CHURCH AT ANTIOCH.

The first important event that happened in his history was this. When at the time of the preaching of Stephen a considerable persecution had taken place in Judea, the believers who felt it needful to leave the country carried their new faith with them, and made it known wherever they went. They would chiefly make known their new faith to their own brethren, the Jews; but at Antioch in Syria, an important town delightfully situated on the left bank of the Orontes (see map), some of them, who must have had a good deal of the venturesome spirit of St. Stephen in them, preached the new faith to the Greeks. These would probably be Proselytes, people who preferred the simple Theism of the Jews to the sensual worships of Antioch, but were not Jewish in race, and had never been adopted into the Jewish community. A mixed Church therefore grew up in Antioch, composed partly of believing Jews and partly of converted Gentiles. When tidings of this came to Jerusalem, the members of the Church there, timid and conservative, but well-meaning and good-hearted, knew not whether to rejoice or fear. They had always thought that Christ was to be a 'light

to the Gentiles.' But that was only a general idea. When the matter concerned actual living Gentiles in Antioch the new circumstances caused some anxiety. Fortunately, it was Mark's gentle cousin Barnabas who was the man chosen to go to Antioch to make inquiry, to see what was going on, and whether these Gentile members were people to be received and trusted. Barnabas was delighted with what he saw there. When he went back to Jerusalem he took with him a glowing report, and more than a report—a substantial collection for the Jerusalem poor. These Gentile converts, he said, were full of joy and Holy Spirit. His account so stirred the mind of his young cousin Mark that when again Barnabas returned to Antioch (it would be nearly 300 miles) John Mark obtained leave to go with him. Barnabas was pleased to take him; and, at Antioch, Mark, under the direction of his cousin, did all he could to help to build up this new movement.

MARK BECOMES A MISSIONARY.

Then by and by there came another great change. Barnabas and Saul (*i.e.*, Paul), who had been labouring together in the Church at Antioch, obtained the sanction of the Church to a great missionary enterprise: the Gospel was for the first time to be carried across the sea.

MISSIONARY LIFE.

Sent forth with the blessing of the Church, and taking Mark with them as assistant and secretary, they went

to the port of Seleucia, and there embarking landed first of all at Cyprus, and settled for a while at Salamis. Barnabas belonged to Cyprus, so that here he would not be in a strange land. We do not know what took place at Salamis; but we know that it was no easy task that John Mark had undertaken when he chose to work with these two Apostles. They had no Church to expect and welcome them; they left no organization behind them to forward money to them. Generally they worked at their own callings (Paul was a tent maker), and did their missionary work in such time as they could spare. When they had worked for a time in Salamis they crossed the island from N.E. to S.W., and laboured in Paphos. Here, too, we have no definite particulars except an account of St. Paul's dispute with a sort of conjuror named Elymas. The dispute as recorded is neither very intelligible nor very credible, and we may therefore pass it over. Wherever the missionaries went they preached first in the Jewish synagogue, if there was one, and argued from the Scriptures that Jesus was the 'Christ.' The Jews nearly always resented the new doctrine. There would be an uproar, and then the missionaries would preach to the Gentile proselytes. This took place again and again.

JOHN MARK'S MISTAKE.

From the island the missionaries passed over to the main land, and laboured in Perga and in Antioch of

Pisidia. We leave them there; for at Perga John Mark decided to go back home. We have no hint given of what caused his return. The most successful work of the first mission journey was yet to do when John Mark gave up. Whether he found the hardships of an unsupported travelling missionary too great, or whether he was definitely displeased with some action or speech of Paul's, we do not know: but that Paul was angry with him for leaving we are certain. When the two Apostles returned and Mark heard of their adventures—how they preached with much success at Pisidian Antioch, till the unbelieving Jews made a tumult and drove them out of the city; how a similar experience took place at Iconium; how at Lystra the superstitious people mistook them for gods and would have worshipped them; but how their enemies from the last places they had visited followed them up and caused them to be stoned, so that Paul was left for dead; and how he and Barnabas still persevered and would let nothing daunt them—John Mark's better nature spoke in him, and he made known to Barnabas that he wished again to be allowed to be with them when again they should go forth. Barnabas would have been glad to have him on the second missionary tour, but Paul was relentless.

'CAST DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED.'

He would not have the man, he said, who had once deserted him. And

so Paul went in one direction with Silas as companion, and Barnabas in another direction with John Mark as his assistant and disciple. But those who wrote our book of Acts cared more for St. Paul than for Barnabas and Mark, and we have little more information of the latter.

In the little letter of Paul to Philemon, Mark sends salutations; so he does in the letter to the Colossians. It would seem, then, as if he visited Paul when Paul was a prisoner in Rome. He is mentioned also in the questionable second epistle to Timothy. Finally, the second Gospel is traditionally ascribed to him, and it is said to have been composed from the recollections of the Apostle Peter. The story that he was afterwards a Bishop can be left out of account.

SUMMARY.

Let us sum up what we know. We know John Mark's home in the early days as the meeting-place of believers in Jesus. They held religious meetings in his mother's house. Peter was well acquainted with the family, and, apparently, called Mark his young son. (Peter may have been the means of their conversion.) We know that Mark was the cousin of one of the most ardent workers, and one of the most gentle-natured men in the Christian community, namely, Barnabas. We know that he went out as a missionary with that great man and with Paul, but for some reason—weariness, impatience, or some other cause—

he gave up before the end, and returned home to his mother's house. We know that when he would have repented he was accepted readily by his cousin, but rejected by St. Paul, and for this reason his further history is only conjecturally known. But we may be sure he worked faithfully with Barnabas; if the notices in the Pauline epistles are genuine he must have been at a later period reconciled to Paul; he may still later have worked with the Apostle Peter (reference above), whom he had known from early days. Finally, the vigorous and pictorial narratives of the Second Gospel are said to have been compiled by him. Surely he was a good, perhaps a great man! And if Paul refused to overlook his one mistake and preferred to work without him, we can only say *that* was a mistake of Paul's. And we hope it is true that Paul repented his own blunder, and said to Timothy, 'Take Mark and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry' (*II. Tim.* iv. 11).

Never cast off a friend for one mistake. If there is joy in heaven over repented sin, there should be joy on earth for a mistake retrieved. He who has disappointed an apostle may yet live to write a gospel. Be a true 'Son of Consolation' to him who has failed, and help him to do better. Above all, never despair of yourself. It is the 'weak things,' as St. Paul says, that God chooses to do His work, if only they trust His love and do their best.

JAMES RUDDLE.

Some Churches of the New Testament.

Introductory.



IF you take up a copy of the New Testament you will see that a large part of it is filled by what are called 'The Epistles'; the reading will not appear so interesting as in the Gospels, nor can you easily understand all that is written. The book of 'The Acts,' which comes just between the Gospels and the Epistles, helps to explain the origin of the latter, and clears away some of the difficulties. We learn that after the death of Jesus, those who loved him and believed in his teaching accustomed themselves to meet together; that after a time earnest men felt compelled to go out even into distant lands to speak of Jesus and his teaching concerning God, man, and the future life; that as the result of such work little groups of believers in Jesus—Christians—were soon to be found in the various towns of Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece, and in Rome. It was to these early Christian communities, or Churches as we call them, that the 'Epistles,' or letters, were sent.

It is useful to learn something about these early Churches—not only because they are so much referred to in the New Testament, but because it was through them, very largely, that what is called Christianity has come down

to us to-day, and it is they which have to a large extent formed the model or pattern of Christian Churches since.

Unfortunately, very little is known about these first Churches; and when we try to imagine what their services were like, how they were governed, and what effect they had upon the towns in which they flourished, we have to rely chiefly upon a few hints we gather from the New Testament itself, and must not expect to find much help from any other quarter. This is so, because in the earliest times the followers of Jesus were so despised that no historian or writer would have thought it worth his while to give a description of their Churches; and later on the persecution of Christians set in, and became so bitter that the meetings had to be held secretly, and everything was done by the enemies of the new religion to misrepresent the customs and teachings which to them seemed foolish and dangerous.

From what can be made out, some twenty Churches or so must have been founded by Paul and those of the disciples who took up the work of preaching, but the number is by no means certain. Of these, the Churches at Corinth, Rome, Thessalonica, Philippi, and Ephesus have, together with that at Jerusalem, become famous; of many we know nothing but the name, while there were probably several of which we have not heard at all.

At first, it is clear, the early Christians continued to attend the

synagogue (or Jewish Church) in their own town or village, and only occasionally met together to hear from the lips of some disciple the story of Jesus and his teachings; but as the differences between Jews and Christians became greater (or seemed to become so) the custom of meeting together regularly for worship as well as for instruction soon sprang up. Their services were like our own in many respects: passages of Scripture—Old Testament, of course—were read and explained, prayer was offered, new converts were instructed in the chief Christian doctrines, and now and then a chosen speaker told afresh some incident in the life of Jesus, or explained one of his 'sayings' which the believers had learned by heart. Probably a 'hymn' or 'psalm' was sung by the whole congregation.

So closely united were the members of the little Churches that they seem almost to have shared all their possessions; it is certain they were very careful to see that none who shared their faith suffered poverty so long as others had means with which to relieve it. A good deal is said in the Epistles about the various charities which went on; and it is plain that the richer Churches often helped the less fortunate, as well as doing their share towards helping on the common missionary work. This practical comradeship is one of the most delightful features of these early Churches, and our modern Churches have much to learn from them in this as in other

respects. Their unbounded generosity to strangers who came with no other claim than their common faith, their faithfulness during times of persecution, and their zeal in promoting the religion they loved, should incite to nobler efforts all who are in any way members of Christian Churches, as even our Sunday scholars may be.

Reading the Epistles we cannot fail to notice that the Churches of the New Testament had their faults as well as their virtues; by them we can be warned. The tendencies to split up into parties and factions, to follow blindly the teachings of one leader and dispute the authority of all others, to be too exacting with weaker brethren, to revert to the bondage of sin from which the example and teaching of Christ had set them free—tendencies which were very marked in some of these Churches and which, perhaps, ultimately led to their disappearance as organized bodies—are not altogether unknown in religious circles to-day. Paul has something to say to the Churches of England, as well as to those in Corinth or elsewhere, respecting which our lessons will tell us. (Read *Acts* iv. 32-35.)

Questions.

1. What are the 'Epistles' of the New Testament?
2. Name some of the places where Christian Churches were founded by the early disciples. Can you find them on the map?
3. What is a Jewish 'synagogue'?

What did the early Christians do in their own places of worship?

4. How did they deal with their poorer brethren?

5. Why is it useful to learn what we can about these Churches?

The Church in Jerusalem.

Reading. *James* iii.

AFTER the death of Jesus the greater number of his friends returned to their country homes, but a few of the bolder and more faithful ones remained in the city which had proved so fatal to their master. * Afraid at first of being recognized as followers of the martyred prophet they met secretly in an upper room, and only by degrees did they gain sufficient courage to declare themselves boldly disciples of the Nazarene. Out of this timorous band sprang the first Christian Church, the Church of Jerusalem.

Years must have passed before its numbers were in any sense large, and even at its best it probably never boasted many members. Although they were believers in the teachings of Jesus, these early founders had no difficulty in worshipping in the Jewish Temple, and there is every reason to believe that the custom of having separate worship only gradually grew up as they were persecuted by the authorities. Such meetings as they had were held in private houses, a church building such as we are familiar with being quite unknown in early

Christian history. One James, said by some to be cousin or even brother to Jesus, seems to have been recognized as the head of the little company in the earliest days, and in after years great honour was paid to his name. Our reading is taken from an Epistle attributed to him, in which some very good teachings are given, though we also find curative practices recommended which show that in some respects the early Christians had much to learn. Peter also was an important leader, and of him much of marvel is told in the Book of Acts—a book which unfortunately cannot be taken as containing a very trustworthy record.

The members of this community, we must be glad to find, were not content to keep to themselves the good teachings of Jesus, but longed to spread it abroad among the other cities of Palestine, and wherever their countrymen had settled, thus giving every Jew a chance of hearing about the 'Messiah' who had come at last. Accordingly missionaries went out from them to different parts, preaching their gospel, and where possible founding Churches; but these teachers always looked to Jerusalem as their 'mother-church,' and considered the Churches they founded should do the same. Hence the Church in Jerusalem in the earliest days occupied a most important place. Councils, or gatherings of representatives from all the Churches, were held there, and decisions given on such occasions were held to be binding on all Christians. Accounts of such

Councils are to be found in the Book of Acts.

Very early in its history the Church of Jerusalem learned the bitter lessons of suffering and persecution. Stephen was the first martyr, and his death was followed by that of James the son of Zebedee; and, later on, the great James ('James the Just,' as he was called) fell also. Such losses bound the group of friends closer together, and made them value all the more highly the faith which cost them and their loved ones so much.

History tells how Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans under Titus, and how it was ultimately destroyed in the year 70; and there is a tradition which says that the Christian Church left the town just before its fall, and took up its abode at Pella some fifty miles away to the North-East. Very little more is heard of this Church; it had its overseers or bishops, and for some time at least they were considered supreme authorities in matters of doctrine and discipline. When the Roman Emperor Hadrian rebuilt Jerusalem in 120 A.D., and allowed all except orthodox Jews to dwell in the city, it is recorded that the Christians, Jews or Gentiles, returned thither and elected Marcus their thirteenth bishop in the year 137. That is the last trace we have of this Church, whose history, could it be told, must be full of interest.

The Jerusalem Church was noted for what is called its 'Judaism.' The members, being nearly all of them

Jews, naturally clung to the old Jewish ideas, and could not easily overcome the narrowness of thought which believed that the Jews alone were the people loved of God. Many and bitter were the struggles which Paul and the more liberal leaders had to endure before they could get the 'authorities' at Jerusalem to allow a man to become a Christian without first of all becoming a Jew. Probably unto the last—that is, unto the final dispersion of the Jews in 139 A.D.—the Church of Jerusalem was Jewish-Christian, holding fast by the old ideas, and never heartily agreeing to the spread of Christianity among the Gentiles. But Christianity, if it is anything, is a world-religion; cooped up in Jerusalem it would have dwindled into a Jewish sect; in the hands of Paul it had a chance to expand and become the hope of the world.

We have referred to the Epistle of 'James'—it is addressed to the Jews of the 'Dispersion.' No epistle is addressed to the Jerusalem Church, presumably because there was no need; but the one to the Hebrews probably represents the Scriptural exposition and kind of teaching that were common amongst its members.

We must honour the Church in Jerusalem for its faithfulness during dark days and for the generosity which prevailed amongst the members towards their fellow-Christians; and although its leaders, seen from our standpoint, may seem to be of narrow views, it must be remembered that

they were intensely in earnest and unquestionably religious in an age when hypocrisy and unbelief were rampant. (Read *Acts* vi. 8-15, vii. 54—viii. 1.)

Questions.

1. Why is this Church so important in Christian history?
2. What was a Council? Do you know what the Councils recorded in *Acts* decided?
3. What were *Jewish-Christians*?
4. What is a martyr? Who was the first Christian martyr? Where did he die?

The Church in Rome.

Reading. *Rom.* xi. 33—xii.

OF all the Christian Churches mentioned in the New Testament that at Rome is decidedly the most important. In the earliest days although Rome was the great centre of the world-empire, the Christian community at Jerusalem was considered first of all the Churches, but after the fall of that city the leadership was gradually transferred to Rome. The time was long before the Roman Church was officially recognized as head, and its bishop allowed the honour of ruling over all the others; but the increasing number and importance of its members made it virtually chief among the Churches before the first century was over. The bishop of Rome (otherwise, the Pope) is still the head of the greater part of

Christendom, and he claims to trace his authority back to the leaders of the primitive Church, founded there some few years after the death of Jesus.

That there was an important settlement of Jews in Rome we know very well, for in the year 52 A.D. the Emperor Claudius issued an edict banishing them from the imperial city (see *Acts* xviii. 1-2) as a people dangerous to the commonweal. This act was evidently repealed in the early years of the reign of Nero, who, profiting by the wise teachings of Seneca and Burrus, celebrated his accession to the empire by showing the greatest tolerance to those who had formerly been considered enemies. The Jews soon came back to carry on their usual trades, most of them to live in the lowest parts of the city, and to be (as most of them were not altogether undeservedly) objects of suspicion and dislike to the rulers of the world.

The news of the Christ and his teachings soon penetrated into this community, and it was not long before a group of believers was gathered together sufficient in numbers to warrant the name of a 'Church,' and to be considered by Paul worthy of one of the longest of his letters.

Who founded this Church we cannot tell, certainly not Paul, and almost as certainly not Peter. Rome was the 'urbs,' the metropolis of all the empire, and it is very likely that some quite unknown disciple of Jesus brought the good news as he travelled there in pursuit of his ordinary business.

Our knowledge of the early Church must be gathered from Paul's epistle to it, and from certain references made in other letters which he wrote while prisoner in the city, for no outside historian refers to it.

The first members were mostly drawn from the lowest orders of the people,—slaves in the households of the great patricians, slaves connected with the imperial palace, freedmen from all parts; nearly all of them Greek Jews with little or no education or wealth, with just here and there a man or woman of finer culture. Yet even these were by no means to be despised, their morals were in all probability higher than those of their masters, or the aristocrats of the city; and it is quite plain, both from the words of Paul and after events, that the little band of believers developed a faithfulness which could only have come from sterling manhood and womanhood. Perhaps from Aquila and Priscilla Paul first heard of these Roman Christians, and by their narrative was moved with a longing to visit them. Certain it is that he determined to preach the gospel in Rome at the earliest opportunity, little dreaming that only as a prisoner should he see that city, and that his bonds should be as eloquent for Christ as his lips would be allowed to be.

Failing an early chance of seeing the Church in person he sends a letter in advance, by means of which he hopes to strengthen their faith of which he has already heard so much,

The letter is both long and difficult to understand. A great part of it is taken up with an attempt to show that Paul was doing right in appealing to Gentiles as well as to Jews; so many of the stricter Jews would not allow a man to accept the new faith unless he first became a Jew, that Paul found himself continually obliged to explain his reasons and defend himself. One is inclined to wonder whether the Roman Christians were much interested in his long and complicated arguments, and whether they did not turn with greater joy to those parts of the letter which dealt with religion on its practical side. This epistle has supplied countless arguments to disputing theologians ever since the first century, and many doctrines have been based upon its teachings. It should never be forgotten that this and other similar writings were not intended to be taken as anything more than friendly letters between the writers and the Churches to which they were addressed; had Paul imagined he was laying the foundations of Christian belief for many centuries to come, when he wrote the epistle to the Romans, it is probable he would have sent out a very different letter. Certain sections as they stand are of very little real use to us, while others are valuable beyond all price, worth learning by heart and following 'by heart' as well. Amongst the latter is what in our Bibles forms the twelfth chapter.

At the end of the epistle is a list of 'greetings;' some think we have here

the names of nearly all the members of the Church of Rome at the time of Paul's writing. Whether that is so or not the list is worth studying, as it throws much light on the state of the Church. Greek names abound. The 'Saints of Cæsar's household' need to be added, as we discover from reading the Epistle to the Philippians.

In addition to what we read in *Acts*, ch. xxviii., we can learn a little concerning Paul's relation to the Roman Church, and his manner of life in the great city, by carefully studying the epistles he wrote while prisoner there. What was his fate in the end we cannot tell, history has nothing at all to say, though tradition has as usual been very busy; it is generally believed that he was martyred by order of Nero.

The Church in Rome had perhaps the most terrible experience of persecution that ever befel the early Christians. Nero, who became the very worst of emperors, was merciless in his attempts to get rid of all the followers of the 'hated sect.' The Christians were accused of causing the great fire in Rome (A.D. 64), and by order of this most inhuman governor were tortured to death in ways so terrible that Tacitus, the historian, says people were moved to sympathy with them even while they hated them—'Culprits they might be, and worthy of extreme punishments; nevertheless the people could not help pitying them, as condemned for no public advantage, but to gratify the cruelty of a single individual.'

The catacombs, or vast underground

burying-places of Rome, give some hints concerning the life of the Church, though not in its earliest times. The inscriptions on the walls can still be read, and tell of a simple religious faith and quiet confidence in the future life. In later years, when another persecution swept over the Church, these catacombs were secretly used for religious services, and more than one massacre took place in their gloomy passages.

We read of 'divisions' in this Church which called forth Paul's rebuke (*Romans* xvi. 17); but the terrible sufferings that soon overtook the little band of Christians must have drawn them closer together. The faithfulness 'even unto death' of members of this Church is one of the marvels of history; no persecution however bitter could make them give up their faith; and although for the first few years of their existence they could not number many of the wealthy or wise of Rome, the early Christians set an example there of earnestness of character, purity of life, indifference to death, and confidence in God which would have powerfully influenced for good any city that was not past all hope of reform. (The dreadful condition of morals in Rome at the beginning of the Christian era is hinted at by Paul in his letter, and he only confirms what we learn from other sources.)

Rome now boasts the greatest cathedral in the world, but we cannot believe that the worship offered there

is any more acceptable to God than that which was celebrated in the house of Aquila and Priscilla.

Questions.

1. How do you suppose Christianity first reached Rome?
2. What Epistles in the New Testament are written from Rome?
3. What are the catacombs, and why do they interest us?
4. What were the good features of this early Church?

The Church at Corinth.

Reading. *I. Cor.* xiii.

THE largest and probably the wealthiest Church of all those founded by Paul was that at Corinth; it was peculiarly his own, destined to cause him great rejoicing and not a little sorrow. The history of its founding as given in *Acts* xviii. is brief, but enough is said there and in the two Epistles to the Corinthians to give us a very fair idea of the nature of the Church.

At the time of Paul's visit, Corinth was practically the capital of what we now call Greece. Athens had had its day, and though it still was considered the principal centre of learning, its importance was far eclipsed by its neighbour and former rival. The geographical situation of Corinth explains its prosperity in ancient times; situated on a very narrow isthmus, it received the trade of two seas; merchants from all parts of the world were to be found

in its streets, and its population was most varied. The history of the town is very interesting and stretches over a long period. Asserting its independence against the all-conquering Romans, it was utterly destroyed by them in the year 146 B.C. For exactly a century it was left a waste, and then under Julius Cæsar it sprang into life again. Following the traditions of its early years the city was rebuilt with great architectural splendour, and temples covered with gold, silver, and brass greeted the eyes of Paul when he stood at the foot of the hill on which it was built. Its glory was of short duration, for after the decay of the Roman Empire it was successively captured by Goths, Slavs, and Turks, dwindling into a mere village, until it was utterly destroyed by an earthquake in the year 1858.

In the time of Paul, Corinth was noted for its luxuriousness and vice. The temples of Aphrodite, or Venus, established there were unfortunately associated with great impurities, against which Christianity from the first had to wage war. Recognizing the importance of this town, and finding friends and fellow-craftsmen there, Paul made a stay of eighteen months, establishing a Church which from the first consisted chiefly of those whom the authorities at Jerusalem would have called Gentiles. To some extent it was a rival of the synagogue, and represented the first attempt at christianizing those who were not brought up as believers in the One God. Doubtless this Church was very dear

to Paul, and he was proud of the results of his work in connection with it. He seems to have paid it at least two visits, and to have written other letters in addition to those we have in the New Testament. As was the case with all the others, the Church at Corinth could not number many intellectual or wealthy members; slaves, artisans, freedmen of every sort were its mainstay.

A study of *Corinthians* i. and ii. reveals to us the fact that serious difficulties arose in the Church after Paul's departure—difficulties which show not only that the members were disturbed by contentions over points of doctrine, but that the evils of the society in which they lived had not been altogether abandoned. The first Epistle seems to have been written in answer to a statement of difficulties sent in the form of a letter from the Corinthian Christians to Paul. The questions of eating meat that had been offered to idols and of marriage were those that he undertook to answer; but before doing so he reproves them first for their dissensions and quarrels, and then for tolerating in the Church a man of notoriously evil life. In both letters he speaks as with authority, but in the second we find him defending himself against those who were inclined to despise him and deny his right to rank with the apostles. It is sad to find how completely the Corinthians fell from grace; despite one or two notes of praise in the Epistles we can see even by a superficial reading that

the troubles with which Paul had to deal were most serious, and threatened the life of the Church. Members quarrelled with each other, and carried their disputes into the Law Courts; the love-feast which originally was a memorial of the last evening Jesus spent with his disciples had become a scene of noisy revelry very much akin to the banquets of the local temples; Paul had to speak harshly concerning some of their defects, and to promise stern dealings if they were not amended. The probability is that no great improvement took place, for the last notice we have of the Church at Corinth is about forty years later, when Clement of Rome writes them a letter regretting their disputes and referring to Paul's Epistles.

Virtues the Church evidently possessed and considerable spiritual gifts; their generosity to the poorer brethren at Jerusalem is more than once commended. Even their faults have been over-ruled for good in God's providence, because they provoked some of the finest and most inspiring utterances of the great Apostle—their spiritual father. The two Epistles to the Corinthians are storehouses of most valuable teachings, profitable for reproof and for edification alike. So out of evil some good has come.

There are preserved an Epistle of the Corinthians to Paul and his reply thereto; but though of very early date they are, like many other ancient epistles, manifestly spurious.

Questions.

1. What do you know about Corinth?
2. Why was Paul so attached to the Church in this town?
3. What were the failings which so injured the Church?
4. What other letters in connection with the Corinthian Church have you heard of?

The Church at Ephesus.

EPHESUS was, at the time of Paul, the most important city in what we now know as Asia Minor, and we are not surprised to learn that the great missionary made this town his home for three years, and in it established an important Church.

The population of Ephesus was in the first century a very mixed one indeed, so far as nationalities were concerned; but a common loyalty to the worship of Artemis (or Diana), whose magnificent temple was the pride of the city, united the greater number of those whom birth, commerce, or choice compelled to live within its walls. The Jews, however, were there in considerable numbers, and retained their national beliefs and religious customs. Considerable toleration had been recently extended to them: their synagogue was safe from molestation, and by decree of the emperor they were allowed to observe their own sabbath. Living to some extent apart from the rest of the inhabitants, and

not sharing the general enthusiasm for the great heathen temple, they were naturally objects of dislike, and the first Christians being by the majority not easily distinguished from the Jews, suffered in the same way. Grecian and Asiatic thought blended in Ephesus, and a city which had produced great artists, philosophers, poets, and musicians had very little sympathy with a faith which seemed in its eyes barbaric, stern, and opposed to natural instinct.

From contemporary history we learn that Ephesus was a remarkable city in every way, but especially in its architectural buildings; the various gymnasia and baths, the temples, the great theatre (the largest in the world, seating at least 50,000 people), and chief of all,—the temple or shrine of Artemis, justified the pride that the inhabitants felt in its magnificence; its history was long and not without honour, it had always been a rich city, and even after it had been robbed by avaricious conquerors its store of treasure seemed little reduced.

The celebrated temple was said to have been re-built no less than seven times, the edifice standing in the time of Paul being the finest of all. The dimensions preserved for us by one historian, and partially revealed by excavation in modern times, show it to have been of enormous size; the amount of its art and other treasures is almost fabulous,—it was deservedly ranked amongst the wonders of the world. The image for whose preservation this shrine was erected was said

to have fallen from heaven, and to have been a representation of Artemis, the Amazonian goddess, afterwards claimed as Diana by the Romans. It may be that originally this image was nothing more than a meteorite or a fantastically shaped block of wood. The statues of the Ephesian Diana, still preserved, show her to have been considered the controller of the fruitfulness of the earth,—pointing to an old nature worship indulged in by the earliest inhabitants of Asia Minor, and doubtless full of poetry and myth.

In the time of Paul very little of the religious significance of paganism was realized, and the worship at Ephesus was probably idolatry pure and simple. One feature of the life of Ephesus should be kept in mind,—the people were immensely fond of magical arts; mysteries of every sort they delighted in; soothsayers, exorcists, astrologers, magicians of all kinds abounded, and the priests of the various temples (including of course the greatest of them all) were adepts in such practices as have made famous the names of modern performers.

Paul's first efforts were as usual directed to the orthodox Jews that met regularly in the synagogue. Here as usual also, he found little or no encouragement and was accordingly obliged to go on independent lines, appealing no longer to his own countrymen alone, but to the Greeks and others who dwell in this most hospitable of cities. The thrilling story of one of Paul's adventures in

Ephesus is told (with customary embellishments) in *Acts* xix. 23-41; and in the earlier part of the same chapter we find that the fondness for magic did not altogether forsake the early Christians, although doubtless many a protest was made against it.

A peculiarity of the Church at Ephesus was that a certain form of Christianity was preached there before Paul's arrival, and left its traces till later times. Apollos may have been in the later years a co-worker with Paul, but it is certain that in the early days he preached 'another gospel.'

That divisions entered into the Church in this city we gather from the warning said in *Acts* xx. 29-30 to have been given by Paul to the elders who came to receive his message, also from a sentence or two in the first epistle to Timothy, and the mysterious words addressed to that Church in *Revelation* ii. 1-7.

Ephesus is now a miserable ruin, and most diligent search has failed to discover any very reliable traces of early Christianity. The name of St. John was soon associated with the city, and legend has it that it was there he died. In the year 431 an important Council of the Church was held at Ephesus, and it is not unlikely that the lineal descendants of those who heard Paul's words in the house of Tyrannus may have entertained the later representatives of the great missionary.

The pretty legend of the Seven Sleepers forms a connecting link in

history, and we wonder how the Ephesian Christians suffered and endured under the terrible Diocletian persecution. There is, as you know, an epistle in the New Testament which is entitled 'To the Ephesians,' but great doubt is felt as to whether it was really to them it was originally addressed. It reads very much like a circular or pastoral letter intended for all the Churches, and bears no sign of having been written to a Church with which Paul was on most friendly terms, and whose inmost life, by his three years' acquaintance, he must have known most intimately. (See R.V. note on first verse.) The epistle, to whomsoever addressed, is particularly valuable, for the latter part of the last chapter well deserves learning by heart.

Read *Ephesians* vi.

1. Where was Ephesus?
2. For what was the town celebrated?
3. What do you know of
 - (a) 'Ephesian Letters' or Epistles?
 - (b) The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus?
4. How long did Paul stay in Ephesus, and how did he carry on his missionary work there?

A. HARVIE.

My Pond.



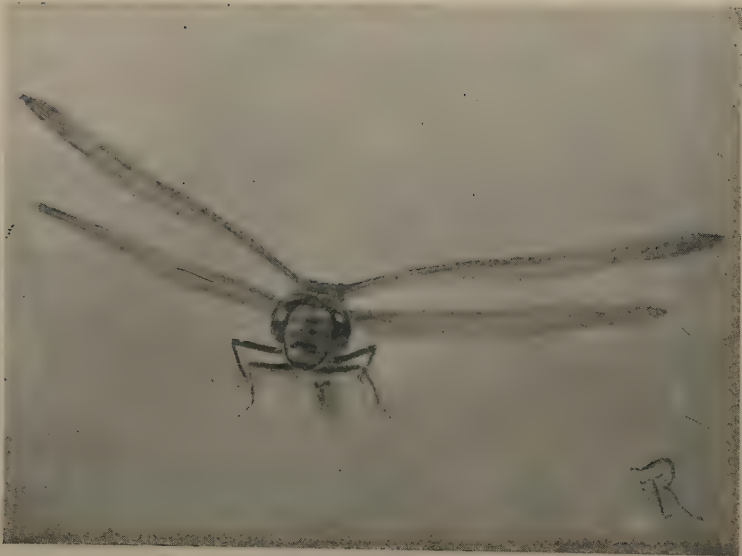
ALL go shares at *my* Pond. It belongs to us all. The farmer says it is *his* pond, because he owns the field in which it lies. The horses and cows claim it, and go to drink just as often as they like. The swallows skim over it, and take a sip as they fly, and collect the moist clay on its margin to build their nests against my chapel, which is only about thirty yards away. The water vole has a burrow in its banks, and so he and his wife claim it as *their* pond. Mr. Stickleback, who is a very domesticated fish, does all the nursing, has a brood of two or three hundred wee sticklebackies,—and they all to a fish say it is *their* pond, for in it they were born, and in it they mean to end their days. But when they say that, they at once have to allow that there are hundreds and thousands and millions of other owners, everyone of which (or whom) has just as good a right to claim it. The dragon-flies, of every kind, flying over it to-day (it is September, and there are lots about) were all 'born and bred' in the pond—yes, *in* the pond. For dragon-flies and may-flies and day-flies, and I don't know how many other flies have lived the best part of their lives in the waters, and only left the pond for the open-air after a long childhood and youth spent below.

* [Materials for lessons on the Churches of Galatia and Philippi may be found in the Sunday School Association's Manuals by Dr. Drummond and the Rev. V. D. Davis.—EDITOR.]

"THE DRAGON-FLY.



At Rest.



Poised in Flight.

HOW TO SEE A DRAGON-FLY.

Now, as a certain person, who is called 'Mr. Editor,' has asked me to tell you 'just what I like,' I have settled it in my mind to write about some of the folk who share the pond with me, and who spend their wonderful and busy child-life in its waters, and then come out and fly about for a few days' holiday before they die. The dragon-flies are amongst these. You have often seen those great big dragon-flies—'horse-stingers,' you know—awful fellows, with four broad wings and big heads, and long bodies that bend round in such a threatening way that it is no wonder you call them 'stingers.' But they have no sting at all, and could not hurt if you caught one and held it in your hand. 'If you caught one!' Yes; but they do take a lot of catching, those big strong-winged dragons. They are about the best fliers in the insect world. Forward, backward, sideways—all equally well. Did you ever see a dragon-fly going backwards? Tail first—head last. How he does it is the puzzle. Reverses the engine somehow, I suppose! Anyway, it is not very easy to catch a wary dragon-fly. Well, now, let me tell you what happened to me only two weeks ago—one day at the end of August. I was sitting on my heels at the edge of the pond—*my* pond—you know, when up came a dragon-fly—Mrs. D.F., in fact, and took a look at me. Now, Mrs. D.F. has no need of spectacles, her

sight is good, and she stared at me with 'all her eyes.' I looked like an old tree stump, I suppose, sitting there in a brown suit of clothes, muddy shoes and trousers, sitting, oh! so still, crouched on my heels and waiting. It was evident that I was 'an object of interest' to Mrs. D.F., for she flew round me a few times, and then poised herself in the air right in front of my face, and gazed with a fixed stare at me, as I said, 'with all her eyes!' Just think what it would be like to have *twenty-four thousand* eyes all riveted on you, and you crouched in the mud on the bank of the pond claimed by the owner of those twenty-four thousand eyes! It is bad enough to have a one-eyed gamekeeper watching you, as well I know; but to be stared at, and wondered at, and mistrusted, and warned off by a lady, who claimed the pond as hers, and looked after her claim with every eye she had—well, you would think it called for heroism, would you not? Did I turn and run? Did I wish the ground would open under me and let me in? It was doing that already; but I never budged—I just *stared back!* Rude? I never before had seen a dragon-fly in all its glory so close, and I revelled in its perfect beauty of form and clever poising in the air, the wings giving a booming hum as they vibrated, and the body glittering and glowing with russet brown and emerald and sapphire colour. So still I kept that I believe I deceived the owner of all those eyes, for at last, after one or two half-hearted

tries, she took courage to 'sit on me!' Yes! she pitched on my right knee, and rested there for about two minutes. Perhaps she would have stayed longer, but a strange sort of tingling began to be felt in the thumb and first finger of my right hand, and in a very deliberate way I found my hand moving towards the dragon-fly; and, right before those twenty-four thousand eyes, my thumb and first finger took Mrs. D.F. by the thorax under the wings and held her gently up to return the compliment, and look at her with all my eyes! Of course, my admiring gaze embarrassed her ladyship, and she made a slight attempt to get away; but the fact is, she was so surprised that a tree stump should behave as I had done, that she resigned herself almost without any effort to escape, and I handled her gently and took her home with me, and photographed her alive; and here is her portrait 'as large as life,' to prove the truth of what I have been telling you. And why have I told you all this? Just so that you may know that as soon as you have learnt to sit quietly on your heels and look around you with keen watchful eyes and without jerky motions, you will see things that you can never see otherwise. Birds and fishes and squirrels and insects can all be seen at their best just so. Only this very afternoon, I sat reading and making notes in my garden, and not two yards away was an African marigold to which two red admiral butterflies had taken a liking. There they stayed, quite close to me,

and only flew away after two hours' steady work, just as the sun was sinking into the west. Now, how much better a butterfly looks alive on a flower, than pinned out in a case! And what a lively frolicsome fellow a live squirrel is, and inquisitive too. Keep still, and he (or perhaps she) will want to know as much about you as you do about the squirrel. So my young collector friend, a word in your ear, please. If you must collect, make a collection of happy memories of the times when you let a rare butterfly or other specimen live, and noted how it looked and acted when alive, rather than what it looked like when 'set' in a position it never took whilst living. Doing so, you will find the joy of days in the country in every season of the year made ten times greater, and some 'things of beauty' will remain to give joy to others, and to have joy in their own lives too.

AND SEEING A GNAT.

But what a long way I've wandered from my pond, led away by that bewitching Mrs. D.F. Let me get back to it quickly, or Mr. Editor will be sorry he gave me permission to write just what I liked. He did put in a word for a special talk about *gnats*, I remember now; but, what a subject to talk about! *Gnats*! Small, paltry things, some of them, not the eighth of an inch long! Biting, stinging, maddening things,—first cousins to mosquitoes. Oh! Mr. Editor, why did you not ask me to write about the



MALE GNAT (Culex).

Magnified thirty times.

Archaeopteryx or the Pterodactyl or the Iguanodon, or anything with a big body and a big name? But '*gnat*'—four letters, and one of them not sounded! Too bad, cutting one down like that! Well, perhaps after all, it is as well. To tell all about our little pest of a gnat, with his short name and shorter body, would take a whole volume, and I do not despair of making something out of so small a subject.

I wonder how many who read this have ever caught a gnat in a clean dry bottle, and then looked at it carefully through a magnifying glass. When I am asked to tell about '*the gnat*,' I wonder which one, or which kind. There are so many kinds of gnats that it would take years of careful watching to tell all about the 150 different sorts. So I will be content to describe only one or two of the commoner ones. Now, look at illustration No. 2. That is a sketch of the common gnat (*Culex*), as it looks through a microscope alive. It is just one quarter of an inch long, so that without the help of magnifying glasses we could not see it in all its beauty. And, indeed, it is beautiful and wonderful too. A tiny speck of life, which can see, and probably hear, and can certainly feel and taste and smell. Notice those plumes in front of the head. They are called antennæ (singular, antenna), and are as useful to the gnat as your fingers are to touch and feel, as your nose to smell, and perhaps, though we cannot be certain, as your ears to hear. The male gnat carries antennæ that are like love-

ly plumes, and to me it is wonderful that so much trouble is taken about so small and trifling an object. I counted thirteen joints in each one of the antennæ, and at the base of each joint there spring forth about fifty long hairs, in a whorl or circle. Now, 50 times 13 will make 650, which is the number of hairs that go to form one plume. Therefore, the two plumes will have 1,300. The whole plume measures about one-sixteenth of an inch in length. How small, and yet how perfect! Under the microscope, with a proper light, the plumes shine with brilliant colours, probably due to some infinitely fine pattern of lines wrought on the surface of each hair!

Then, again, the eyes. Each *big* patch of eyes, measuring about one-hundredth of an inch across, is made up of nearly 800 lenses! That will give about 1,600 for the two eye-patches. All that trouble about a wee gnat, that lives its day or two, and then is no more! And no common, careless work either.

And just as wonderful is the part of the gnat which deals with breathing: beautiful fine tubes down each side of the body, branching off into finer tubes, and finer and finer—passing here, there, and everywhere throughout the body, even into the thin gauzy wings, and supplying the blood with oxygen. These fine tubes are so thin-walled that they would be flattened up if they were not kept open by a spiral spring throughout all their length and branchings. How fine those tubes are

I dare not try to say; much less how fine the spring which keeps them open. All I can do, is to wonder and admire! Yet, perhaps I can be thankful also that, in one way and another, I have had my eyes opened to see and my mind made eager to search-out the marvels of Nature's works even in a common gnat.

THE GNAT'S LIFE-STORY.—THE EGG.

But 'one thing leads on to another.' The early life of a gnat is as wonderful as is the gnat itself. A gnat lives only a few days—as a winged insect—but as an inhabitant of *my* pond (shall I not call it *our* pond?) it has lived, it may be, many weeks. One of the most wonderful and interesting things about insects, and indeed about other animals also, is their life history. They seem as if they want to be all sorts of animals one after another—living in water like fishes, and then in air flying like birds, or on land walking like four-footed beasts of the field. Such a strange life history our friend the gnat has! To begin with, the mother gnat lays eggs, and as the baby gnats have to live *in* the water, the eggs must be laid *in* the water. But the baby gnats need to breathe air, and yet live and feed in the water, and even in the eggs the unborn gnats need fresh air! Such hard conditions might well turn Dame Nature's hair grey, if she were an ordinary fussy old person. But she is so clever, and works so quietly and so *naturally*. She has a habit of using every convenience that lies in her way,

which is true economy. Now, what I am going to tell you, will perhaps not be very easy to understand; but once you do understand it, it will explain many a wonderful thing which happens around us.

If you take a glass of water, you probably suppose that every part of that water is just like every other part. But that is not so, for the *surface* of the water is in some way different from all the rest. The surface is something like a skin. It is as if an elastic skin were formed wherever there is a surface of exposed liquid. And that skin is strong enough to bear a considerable weight. A needle made of steel is heavier than water; but it may be placed carefully on the surface 'skin,' and will then float and not sink. If, however, the skin be broken, down sinks the needle!

This film (which I call 'skin' sometimes) only forms on the surface of the water, and it tries to make itself as small as possible. If you allow a little water to fall, it breaks into round drops as it falls. Why *round*? Because the round shape is that which holds most water with least skin. The surface film *forces* the water to shape itself so. It bears a needle upon its surface, and it pulls things into such a shape as to make the smallest amount of film do.

And what has this to do with gnats? Just everything—and not only gnats, but with bubbles and dewdrops and fine Scotch mist, and big thunder shower drops, and with the spreading of rain throughout the soil, and with 'oil upon

Life-history of Gnat (Culex)

I Egg-raft

II Larva

III Pupa

IV Gnat emerging



For fuller description
see note appended
to the lesson

the troubled waters,' making them more restful, and a thousand other things!

But for this surface film on water, the gnats' eggs would not float in a canoe-shaped raft on the top of the water.

When the mother gnat lays her 250 or more eggs, she places them side by side, so as to form a boat-shaped mass. Each egg is cigar-shaped. The small end of the cigar is at the top, and the 250 ends are so near together that the surface film of water, strong and tough, cannot get between them and wet them. They remain always *dry*. The other end is broad and flat and the water wets it, and it is made up of a sort of trap-door, through which the baby gnat will slip out into the water when hatching time has come. Neat, isn't it? The canoe floats dry side up, and fresh air gets into the eggs there; but just as soon as it is ready, the *larva*, as the baby gnat is called, can pop out into the water—there to live like a fish, and feed and grow for many weeks.

THE LARVA.

To live '*like a fish*.' Well, not exactly. That is, not if we are talking about the common gnat, called *Culex*. For our young friend *Culex* must breathe air, of course, and has no gills such as a fish has to draw the air from the water. What is to be done? *Culex* must live in the water, for there is its food; it must breathe what is called 'atmospheric' air, or be suffo-

cated. Well, once more the surface film helps Dame Nature.

Look at my sketch of *Culex* (larva). There is a small head, followed by a thick body, which is continued into a jointed part ending in a fan-shaped tail formed of feathery spines. But just before we come to the tail-fan there is a straight tube pointing in the opposite direction to the fan.¹ This is

¹ The page of illustrations opposite is intended as a model for teachers who use a blackboard.

I. Represents a raft of gnat's eggs, each egg cigar-shaped. The horizontal line represents the surface of the water with the surface film curving up slightly, as is the case when anything wetted floats in water. The ends of the eggs which must not and *cannot* be wetted are shown in the sketch.

II. Represents in bare outline the larva floating at rest and feeding. Note (a) the breathing tube with the surface film curving *down* to it, showing that the open end is not wetted. Three of the five flaps which close it are shown. (b) The tail fan by which the larva raises itself from the bottom to the surface. (c) The mouth with particles of food being swept in by the bristly mouth organs. The spines all over the body ought to have branches like those in the tail fan. They are left bare for the sake of simplicity in drawing.

III. Represents the Pupa in the resting position. The surface film again curves down to the opening of the breathing tubes. Through the transparent pupa-case the eye and one antenna can be seen in process of formation, also the wings and legs.

IV. Represents the emerging of the gnat from the pupa-case, as I observed it whilst writing the lesson. (a) Pupa floating partly out of water and skin cracking on top. (b) Gnat pushing out at the opening. (c)

the breathing tube of the *Culex* larva. The end of it must always be just at the surface of the water when the larva breathes. No water must ever get into it or the larva would be suffocated. The food of the larva lies just below the surface, and so its head must be kept hanging down, so that it can feed and breathe at the same time, and that without exertion or trouble. And all this is managed by the tough elastic surface film of water.

Prof. Miall, in his 'Natural History of Aquatic Insects,' gives a very interesting account of all this, and I have been comparing what he says with the larva from which I have drawn the sketch. At the end of the breathing tube are five flaps like the petals of a pansy flower. These can be brought together at the tip so as to close the end of the tube, and at the same time hold a small bubble of air. When at rest, the larva just lets the tip of its breathing tube reach the surface, and the five flaps open and spread out at the surface, and the strength of the water film prevents the larva sinking. But what prevents the larva floating like a stick along the top of the water? Prof. Miall says that the larva is really slightly heavier than water, and so it does not float; but hangs down, and

only the pull of the surface film prevents it sinking. All this is perhaps rather hard to understand, but it is very wonderful, and once you do understand it, you will admire the way in which Nature takes such pains to make all things work together for good—even in the life history of so trifling and insignificant a thing as a gnat!

When the gnat is frightened, it sinks down to the bottom. In order to do this, all it has to do is to close the five flaps, and so break connection with the surface film. Down it goes by its own weight, head first, because of that little bubble it carries down under the closed flaps at its tail. And that little bubble of fresh air has to serve it whilst it remains below. But how to get it up again, when it is heavier than water—that's the question? Well, the beautiful tail-fan manages that. About all the work the larva has to do is to rise to the surface, which it does by beating the fan to and fro, just as you may see sailors do with a single oar out of the stern of a boat. Once at the surface, the flaps fly open, and the larva is at rest again and begins once more its feeding operations.

THE PUPA AND THE WINGED ONE.

So much feeding results in growth and development, and at last comes a time when some alterations must be made in order to change the swimming larva into the flying gnat. Under water it has no wings and no legs and no plumy antennæ. Its eyes also are only fitted for obscure water sight—in fact, the

Gnat with two front legs standing on the surface film, pulling the other legs and abdomen out of the now empty and shrivelled pupa-case. The time taken from the splitting open of the pupa-case to the entire emergence of the gnat was not more than three minutes.

whole thing needs changing for its new way of life. This change will take a few days certainly, and there must be no more feeding during that time. And, you see, the change has all to be managed *under water*. Bad for the wings, you think? Why, yes, of course; and bad for the whole gnat too if it got wet. But we have not reached the end of Nature's cleverness yet. The larva gets quiet and restful and shrinks up a little, becoming much thicker at the head end and shorter in the tail. But, strange to say, the big head end gets lighter and the tail end rather heavier. The breathing tube is lost, as it would be of no further use; instead of it two other tubes—very fine indeed: too fine for water to get into them—are formed just behind what was the head of the larva, and as the changed larva floats head up these tubes just reach the surface film, and it opens enough to let them through. Look at the illustration [III] of the *Pupa*, for that is what we must now call our young gnat, and you will see what a strange change has come about! Inside that water-tight case our larva is being changed into a perfect winged gnat. No more food is necessary, but air is very needful. As the changes within take place the size of the Pupa is increased, so that it is lighter and so tends to float a little out of the water at the top. When at length the time arrives for the insect fully winged to come out and live in the air, that part of the skin of the Pupa which is out of the water

dies and cracks, and the water film pulls it open, and the gnat's shoulders (thorax) and head and antennæ are thrust out. I watched this taking place three days ago. It was a marvel to see how the thing was managed so that the perfect gnat did not get the least little bit wet. After the head and thorax and wings had emerged, the two front legs were drawn out, and as they were covered with very fine bristly hairs they could be set down upon the surface film of the water and did not sink in at all. Then using the legs that were out, for what mechanics call a purchase, the gnat quickly drew out the four other legs and the abdomen—that is, the long-jointed end of the body. The six legs were very long, and the gnat stood on the surface film of the water for a few seconds, until the wings had expanded a little and become hardened; then off he flew, without ever having had a lesson in flying—a perfect gnat, and one of great beauty too!

My sketch was made after I had caught him again and placed him in a small glass box under the microscope. It had to be quickly done, for he was restless and wanted to go and see the world and enjoy the new way of life to which he was fitted.

Do you notice his plumed antennæ?—so soft and feathery, and each composed, as I said, of 650 radiating hairs. Well, it is thought by some that it is by means of these that the gnat can hear. If it be indeed so, is it not wonderful that so seemingly trivial a

creature is so well provided with what are called 'sense organs'? And then his eyes—so hard to draw so as to represent their marvellous beauty and perfection!—shining in one light like hundreds of emeralds and in another like as many rubies.

In my sketch also I want you to notice the thick part of the body to which the legs and wings are fixed. That is the 'thorax,' and it has to be large to contain the muscles that work the legs and wings. When you hear a gnat humming you must please remember that the sound is produced by the vibration (shaking) of the wings, and to produce it they must give about 3,000 shakes a minute!

When you catch a gnat and look at it, carefully remembering these things about it, you will not think it such a worthless and trivial insect. At all events, the Creator of it did not spare any means to make it perfect of its kind.

The gnats with plumed antennæ are the males. The females have very much simpler ones—jointed, indeed, but adorned with only a few short hairs. But—oh! the lady gnat has such a tongue! It is she who 'bites'; her mouth is composed of a number of sharp-barbed lancets, and with these she can inflict those dreadful wounds that have caused the tiny gnat-folk to be so disliked and dreaded.

Now, tell me, is not the whole story of the life of a gnat very wonderful? So many difficulties, and always a way out of them provided as each arises,

It looks as if even so small and trivial a creature as a gnat was cared for, when there is so much trouble taken to fit it for every sort of surrounding.

We call it '*trouble*' when we have to bother about preparations for moving from one house to another; but Nature seems to have a way of fitting things together so as to work nicely. *My* pond and every other pond contains many thousands of gnat larvæ every summer—and, indeed, all the year round; and though, perhaps, the wind may be troublesome at times and spoil the outcoming of some gnats, Nature has a way of lessening that evil. The pupa when the water is rough does not remain long at the surface, and so does not dry and crack open; but when there comes a calm, sunny evening, out come the gnats in swarms, and we know that it is likely to be fine next day also.

WONDERS EVERYWHERE!

Now, Mr. Editor, I might go on and on talking about gnats for hours, but I had better leave something untold for those who read this to find out for themselves. Many things we may find in books, but nothing is so interesting or stays so well in our memory as what we have seen for ourselves. Why, since I was asked to write these notes on gnats they have nearly driven me out of my mind—not by buzzing and humming and biting, but by being *so various*. I have told you about *Culex*. But that is only one kind of gnat. Whilst looking for the eggs of the

larvæ and pupæ and full-grown gnats of this kind, I have been bewildered with hosts of others who wanted me to tell about them. Some larvæ were as clear and transparent as glass; others were bright blood-red. Some pupæ instead of breathing through tubes have a beautiful white tree-like tuft of gills—and so on.

My pond is no better and no worse than hundreds of ponds all over the land. The more I look the more I find in it and around it. And there is not a thing I find that does not grow more wonderful the more I study it, and more beautiful also.

Indeed, I begin to think that the wonder and the beauty must be in the mind of the one who looks; for often enough those who don't look much call the same things *dirty* and *ugly* and *horrid*, when I know very well that they are quite otherwise.

Sometimes boys and girls are horrid at first; but when you understand them better they are—well, I won't say, for fear you might get conceited. An earnest laddie or lassie, who is at the same time good at heart, is, perhaps, as beautiful and delightful a child of Nature as all the gnats and other things in the world put together.

THOMAS ROBINSON.

[TEACHERS in search of illustrations from Nature will find an ample store in 'A Year of Miracle,' by the Rev. W. C. Gannett, a book obtainable at Essex Hall, price eightpence.—EDITOR.]

The House and its Builder.



HERE is a Bible verse that reads, 'A building of God, a house not made with hands.' Paul meant the spiritual body, in which, he says, the soul will live hereafter. But how well the words describe the Home,—a home right here on earth.

For consider the house, how it grows! The first thing we do is to dig a hole in the planet,—a socket to hold the house down firm. That is taking liberties with Nature, to begin with, as we only make the hole, the room for the house,—the more momentous matter. Then the cellar walls,—do we *make* them? We quarry the stone, drag it out, chip it square, lay it in the mortar-beds; but the stone was laid in the quarry for us, atom by atom, crystal by crystal, ages before the first mortal trod the earth.

And who *made* the timber in the joist, who *made* the clapboards and the shingles on the roof? Men hewed and sawed and split,—the great mills with their iron claws and iron teeth are wonders of human skill; but what hands took sunshine and the rain and a pine-cone a hundred years ago in a wild forest, and with winter storms and spring freshenings and long summer shinings built up the great green tree that waited on the hill till the axe-man came?

W. C. GANNETT.

Sunday Schools at Home & Abroad.

AMERICA.

Hints gathered from a few of our
American Sunday Schools.



ONE of the pleasantest parts of our pleasant little trip to America was the meeting with men and women whose names had long been familiar to us, but whom, up to that time, it had not been our privilege to have met face to face. Among these was Edward Everett Hale, that veteran in the service of our churches, whose sunny spirit and 'armed insight' enables him to see through the clouds of sin, and sorrow, and suffering, and to catch the bright rays of the Sun of Love behind, rays which illuminate human nature and show the divine spark in its very centre. He sees 'through present wrong, the eternal right,' and hopefully looks forward to the time when the clouds shall be dispersed by the magic touch of the golden word, TOGETHER. Man and man together; God and man together; these thoughts, when lived out in men's lives, will be the means of dissipating the gloom and bringing the light of God's heaven into this wondrous world of ours; such is the gospel which Mr. Hale preaches. Can I do better than to make this thought the introduction to my glean-

ings; for does it not fitly apply to every true worker in our Sunday School? Teachers and superintendent *together*; teacher and teacher *together*; teachers and scholars *together*; scholars and scholars *together*; and all these with God, *together*! In this one word we combine our aim, our inspiration, and the source of all our hopes of success—TOGETHER.

The first point that struck me was the difference between the work of the Sunday Schools which I had the opportunity of visiting, and those I have been accustomed to see in England. As there was so little time at my disposal I made the most of it by asking for certain particulars from various schools, and in ten cases I was able to get these question papers filled in, usually by the minister or superintendent. They covered a fairly large area; namely:

Three from New York; one, Washington; two, Chicago; one, Toronto; two, Boston; one, Rochester.

Out of these ten, eight report all their scholars as belonging to families attending the Church, and also that they belong to cultured classes; two, that this is the case with all except a very few.

Now such schools with us are most exceptional; personally, I only know one that partakes of both these characteristics (for usually when the

scholars are children of the congregation, the congregation is mainly composed of artisans), but from what I could gather from questions asked of various friends this seems to be the rule in America; though of course there are, besides, Mission Schools, which are conducted on much the same lines as those called by a similar name over here.

The Sunday School, then, may be considered in America as the children's church, and certain results naturally ensue. First, the year follows the school year in a sense; that is, there is a long summer vacation; from two to even four months the school is closed, because the scholars are all away.

Secondly, series of graduated lessons can be arranged for, because the children are likely to attend from year to year, in the same way as their parents attend the church. And these lessons need neither to be so elementary as they must be for a less cultured class, nor so general in their character as is advisable when the parents of the scholars do not accept our views on theological points.

Thirdly, as the school is, in a very literal sense, the children's church—for frequently they do not attend the church service at all—the devotional part of it takes a very prominent place.

Hanging on the wall in most of the schools was a large card, on which, under the heading, Our Faith, were given the following five items of belief:

The fatherhood of God.

The brotherhood of man.

The leadership of Jesus.

Salvation by character.

The progress of mankind, onward and upward for ever.

This Statement of Our Faith, put together by James Freeman Clarke, I believe, has been taken by Mrs. J. Beatley, Superintendent of the Sunday School in the church where he used to preach, as the foundation of her service. I wish others could have shared my privilege of hearing the way this was rendered on the morning when I was present. The tone of the leader showed plainly the reverent mind behind; there was no seeming—something on the outside—but one felt that every word was an expression of the real soul of the speaker; simple, reverent, loving and clear, through and through.

Several of our English schools have introduced this Statement of Our Faith to their scholars, and some even take it as a basis of a little service, but I think more might be done in this way. And I should suggest, if any conclave of superintendent and teachers decide to use this, or any other simple formula, as the basis of an opening or closing service, that they should let each item be taught separately and explained, making sure that the verse from Bible or poem which serves as amplification is thoroughly mastered, before the whole is used as a devotional exercise. This will do much to take away from the

parrot-fashion which sometimes, unfortunately, prevails in liturgical services.

I will set down here the Explanation of our Faith by Mrs. Beatley, for it will serve as an excellent model for anyone who wishes to put together something of a similar kind. Of course hymns can be introduced, and appropriate illustrations of text, anecdote, or exhortation added, according to length of service desired.

EXPOSITION OF OUR FAITH.

In love to God and love to man

Our simple creed finds ample scope ;

Secure in God's unerring plan,

We walk by faith, are saved by hope.

1. By the Fatherhood of God, we mean that God is a Father, and that all are his children. God is more loving than the best father we know, or can in any way dream of. As children trust their earthly parents, so we trust the Father in Heaven.

'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?'

'Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in Heaven so on earth.'

II. By the Brotherhood of Man, we mean that all are members of one family, and so, are brothers and sisters. Our lives are happiest when we recognize this bond of Brotherhood.

'Therefore let us lay aside bitterness, and wrath, and evil-speaking, and be kind to one another, forgiving one another.'

'If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.'

O Brother-man, fold to thy heart thy Brother !

Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there ;

To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn ; each kindly deed, a prayer !

III. By the Leadership of Jesus, we mean that we believe that Jesus has shown *the way of life* beyond all other teachers. He has taught us that God is our Father, and man our Brother ; and that Heaven is within the heart. He has given us the Golden Rule of life, and has taught us the prayer that has never grown old. We accept him as our Leader, and would walk in his path.

Where'er we walk, our Shepherd goes before.

'I am come, that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.'

O Lord and Master of us all,

What'e'er our name or sign,

We own thy sway, we hear thy call,

We test our lives by thine.

We faintly hear, we dimly see,

In differing phrase we pray,

But dim or clear, we own in thee

The light, the truth, the way.

IV. By Salvation by Character, we mean that the highest peace and joy can only come as we follow the right, forget self, and grow more and more

toward perfection. We may have fine ideas of right, and recite Our Faith every Sunday, but only as we *live* the right, do we follow the Leadership of Jesus, and find the peace and joy of the Heavenly Kingdom.

‘Not every one that saith unto me, “Lord, Lord,” shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.’

‘Behold the Kingdom of Heaven is within you.’

‘To be saved is only this, salvation from our selfishness.’

‘Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?’

‘The fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace!’

The tissues of the life to be
We weave with colours all our own;
And in the field of Destiny
We reap as we have sown.

V. By the Progress of Mankind, onward and upward for ever, we mean that we were made to grow toward God, the Father of our spirits. There is no end to this growth. We have the hope of growing wiser and better as long as we live in this world, and of finding new opportunities of growth in the heavenly life to come.

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more
vast,
Till thou at length art free;
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's un-
resting sea.

The Schools at Work.

The schools I visited were divided up into three sections; first, the infant class; second, the middle school, comprising several classes of children between the ages of eight and thirteen, and third, the senior division, usually taken by the minister.

First, the infant class. I own that it seemed rather strange that children of well-to-do parents should require this help, for surely fathers and mothers ought to be able to do in their families what the so-called working classes may not have leisure to do. And, again, we in England are inclined to think that one of the great advantages of an infant class (though not, perhaps you will say, the highest) is the practical one of giving the busy and often overworked mother a little rest from looking after her children for a couple of hours on Sunday; but certainly in well-to-do homes there is not this to be provided for. In a few schools a paid kindergarten teacher is definitely engaged for the purpose. This appeared to me at first very much like making all the days of the week alike; but afterwards I heard that frequently children do not go to school at quite so early an age as ours do, so that it made a change to go at all.

However this may be I did have the pleasure of visiting several happy little children's classes; and in one school,—belonging to a Universalist Church in Chicago—I was especially

charmed; and so will give a slight account of it here.

After the opening hymn, etc., the sliding doors shut off the infants from the rest of the scholars, one lady took her place at the piano, two or three others sat among the forty or fifty children, and *the* teacher faced the class. She began by telling how there were two visitors present, saying how sure she was that the little ones were glad to see them, and finished by asking if they would not like to sing their welcome. Thereupon the lady at the piano struck up a simple tune and the children sang four lines of greeting. Next there were some new scholars to be welcomed; these were called to 'Teacher,' who said a few pleasant words, and again the music struck up and the children sang another little verse to their new companions.

Then it happened to be the birthday of two little girls and a boy; these came up and received the good wishes from the teacher, who now had a glass money-box brought to her for the birthday children to drop their thank-offerings into, a cent (a halfpenny) for each year they had lived. Again the children sang—this time a birthday greeting to their three companions.

After this a little march was played, and all the children rose in very orderly fashion and marched past Teacher, who still held the money-box, and into this every one who liked dropped in a little offering, and then all went back to their seats. This

money, it was explained, was to buy clothes for some poor child in order that he might be able to go tidy to school; and when a few words about helping, and the spirit in which it should be done, had been said, another verselet was sung about giving the gift 'as to Jesus.'

The lesson proper was then given in a chatty, interesting way, interspersed with many questions, and made thoroughly dramatic and life-like.

The charm of this little class to me lay in its variety and simplicity; the children all took an active part in the proceedings, and had not time to tire of any one thing. Of course a room to itself is an absolute necessity for such a class, but then I think it is always an absolute necessity in the case of every good infant class. We should look on this section of our school as of the first importance; get the boy to like coming as a little child, and you will probably get into real touch with him; he will remain through school life with you if his parents continue to live in the neighbourhood, and you will be able to influence him in a very special way. Therefore with regard to the infant class I would add: 'Get the best teacher you can, get the best room you can for your infant class; see that the seats are low and comfortable; be sure to have a blackboard, and use it freely; and if you can have a piano and it will not disturb other classes, use that freely also.'

In the second section systematic,

graduated teaching seems to be the ideal of the Sunday Schools across the water. And it will be easily understood that, with the children of the congregation to deal with, a five or even a seven years' course may be possible; this, if well carried out, will do more than anything, perhaps, to stop the leakage of which we, in common with so many religious denominations, have so frequently to complain.

Here is one of the seven year series brought out by our Boston Sunday School Society :

1st year. Legends of Beginnings, and the truer Stories.

2nd year. Religions of the older World,—Egyptian, Hindu, Persian, Greek, etc.

3rd year. Growth of Hebrew Religion—Patriarchs and Prophets.

4th year. Non-Biblical Jewish writers, (between Old and New Testament).

5th year. The flowering of Hebrew Religion—New Testament.

6th year. Growth of Christianity.

7th year. The flowering of Christianity. The Liberal movement towards Universal Religion.

This series might be suggestive in those cases over here where the minister has a class of the children of the congregation, but in most of our schools a seven years' course would scarcely be workable.

Another plan is to take one subject

throughout the school, dividing the treatment of it into primary, intermediary, and advanced sections. Several subjects, treated in this way, are published by the Boston Society, and these should prove of great use, one advantage being that at the teachers' meetings—which appear to be more regularly attended than unfortunately is too often the case with us—all go over the ground together, and so get a fuller knowledge of their subject.

It seems strange that in spite of the infinite pains taken by the Boston Society to provide helpful lessons and a children's magazine for our schools, a good many prefer to take the orthodox international lessons and the orthodox children's magazines—at least I heard complaints of this, though not in Boston itself. Nor are we here quite ignorant of this curious indifference to publications which are specially prepared for the needs of our teachers; and this, not because they had been tried and found wanting—that would be a most sufficient reason—but because it is often easier to get books elsewhere, and the little extra trouble is enough to turn the balance in favour of literature with which we are not in thorough sympathy. This certainly ought not to be.

A favourite method for impressing the lesson is to provide every scholar in the middle school with a sort of scrap book, and each week the teacher gives round a picture illustrating the lesson, which is to be pasted in at home.

Sometimes notes of the lessons are put in on the opposite page. Thus, at the end of the year, each child has a book of lessons of its very own to keep. Many of us, I doubt not, have used this method; and, speaking for myself, I have often found a difficulty in getting suitable illustrations, so that it would be a great boon if these could be provided for us.

One other point in conclusion. At the Church of the Disciples, in Boston, the annual holiday was drawing near at the time of my visit, and it was Repetition Sunday. The room was darkened, and pictures illustrating the lessons of the year were thrown on the screen, each being accompanied by a recitation from the Gospel (the course had been on the Life of Jesus), or by poem or hymn. The effect was excellent, and I felt at the time what a good idea it would be to have something of the sort in our own schools, when we might invite the parents to be present, and make a real Pleasant Sunday Afternoon which would be thoroughly appreciated. But the best part of it all was the intelligent manner in which the beautiful language of the Gospel narrative was given. The passage had been learnt with as much care in the matter of intonation, accent, and force as if it had been a 'piece of elocution'; and so the recital was vivid and full of interest instead of being so many words reeled off with a degree of fluency, it is true, but with no emphasis or apparent understanding. MARIAN PRITCHARD.

Welsh Sunday Schools.

THE needs of the Welsh Sunday schools have altered materially during the past twenty-five years. Previous to 1870 they had to perform work necessitated by the inefficiency of the voluntary schools. All this has now changed. The Principality is covered with Board schools, the efficiency of which stands high in comparison with any elementary schools in Great Britain. So the necessity of paying the whole attention to the teaching of reading has been done away with. Previous to 1870 the Welsh Sunday schools were a combination of the elementary school and the Working-man's University. The children were taught to read their native tongue from the Bible, and the adults, arranged in classes according to age, and ranging from seventy to seventeen, dwelt on the metaphysical problems of the Bible.

In fact, a double change has taken place. The teaching of the children has taken another form, and the aged, alas, are no more with us, and their places in a large measure are not filled. And in this transition stage—the stage when the educational wave of the early seventies spread over every town, and village, and cottage in the Principality—something has been lost and something has been gained. The Sunday school then entered but little into competition with the day schools, and so it was the chief centre of intellectual and moral activity. No

modern methods, it is true, were found within its walls; but there was a fervour and an aspiration for truth which was a living fire, in no need of any mechanical methods to keep it alive. Education is making the Welsh people less and less fanciful and imaginative, and more and more practical and rationalistic. And the gain, if we view the situation correctly, will be greater than the loss. Imagination, unless it has reason as its basis, is a house comfortable enough for us in fine weather; but as the complexities of life increase, and as the demands on life multiply, it is a house which avails but little.

The 'grounds' on which the Welsh Sunday schools founded their religion in the past are not the grounds on which we have to build to-day. They built on the surface grounds of the literal inspiration and interpretation of the Bible. There is danger even to-day that the Celtic people—a people born and nurtured in the lap of Nature—should hold a citadel whose foundations are crumbling by an irresistible process. It is then important that this should be realized, that methods of teaching should be employed which are in accordance with the knowledge and spirit of the age. The time has arrived when we should adopt those methods which take into consideration not a part but the whole of the child's and the adult's nature. How can this be done? In the course of a short letter only a mere outline of the course can be sketched.

In the first place, the greatest responsibility rests on the superintendent. He ought to be a teacher and inspirer of teachers. The Government of our country will not allow a man to have charge of the secular education of our children unless he is qualified in the art and science of teaching. But the necessity of this has not yet dawned on us in the Principality of Wales. But it is time that it should dawn. No man is competent to become a superintendent unless he has devoted time to the understanding of at least the elementary fundamental principles on which modern teaching rests.

I take it for granted that the minister is relieved of this work. The secret of success in the ministry is not so much in the carrying of heavy burdens ourselves, but in placing them in neat and compact little parcels on as many shoulders as possible. In this manner the minister will most probably find an efficient school left him by his predecessor, and he will pass it in quite as efficient a manner to his successor. But on no account is he to be brushed aside as of no value in regard to school work. The minister ought to be the 'consulting physician' of the school, and it is well that he should supervise the teaching of the whole school. In this consulting work he will have to map out the road which the whole school has to travel over. If this is done, the actual work of travelling will be easily accomplished. If we give the people ideas they will give those ideas hands and feet. As

the whole nature must be taken into consideration, objects and material which satisfy every part of the nature must be brought before the scholars.

The curriculum should, it appears to me, include the following points among others:—

(a) *Biblical History*: This course can be made attractive for the younger children. It is probably better the Bible itself should not be read for this purpose; and, indeed, it is unnecessary that any book should be used. By pictures representing deeds of heroism, self-sacrifice, benevolence, and other noble subjects represented in the Bible the lesson in Biblical history ought to prove instructive and profitable to the youngest children. The great ideas, the true dignity and object of life, are through illustrations placed in a tangible form before their young minds, and there will grow in their young hearts an instructive tendency to accomplish such noble deeds themselves, as they have witnessed that such exploits are capable of realization.

(b) *Learning by Heart*: The Biblical lesson should precede this memory work, for the former is the reason for the latter. Beautiful psalms, ethical passages from the New Testament, lines of hymns, verses from the poets—all these should prove a delight. Such passages will early train the young mind to breathe the purest moral air, and when such passages are shown to have been realized, or are capable of realization, they will have

an air of reality about them which will enable the child from Sunday to Sunday to place a brick in the bridging of the gulf which would otherwise exist between knowledge and religion, between earth and heaven. The dualism of its life will be reduced to a minimum, and he will escape in after-life many grave dangers.

(c) *Ethical Teaching*: As it has been mentioned, the ethical teaching, as far as the younger children are concerned, should be presented in a concrete form. This holds true, also, as far as adults are concerned, but it is not the whole truth. A step further can now be taken, which would consider ethics as a science and as one phase of religion. The fundamental principles which the science has revealed should be dealt with, for they are the principles which unify the life of humanity. The adult scholar must see that religion is based on the very needs of the race, and that everything which pertains to the making clearer of the difficulties of life is a stem whose roots when traced enter into the nature of God Himself.

(d) *Criticism*: Although it is true that the negative will not carry us a single step forward, it is none the less true that a false positive carries everybody a step backward. The subjects of myths and miracles require delicate handling by a teacher before a class of Celtic children. As they must be handled, the teacher will use his own illustrations in proving that many of the events are natural in an exag-

gerated form, and that tradition has played a powerful part in the records. A knowledge of the growths of legends and myths in the Principality will greatly assist him in this direction. But the positive truth must be presented alongside of the negative work, or else we are pulling down the scholar's house and allowing him to remain roofless.

I am convinced that with diligence and enthusiasm our Welsh Sunday schools can be made serviceable to the interests and welfare of the Church, and of the greatest mental and moral value to the scholars themselves.

W. TUDOR JONES.

The Scottish Sunday Schools.¹

THE Editor's request is for a brief sketch of the Scottish Sunday-schools, their limitations, their present condition and prospects,—a somewhat difficult subject for any individual teacher, when it is remembered how scattered we are. I am afraid that the materials for such an article are as limited as the schools themselves.

As to number we are seven, and so widely apart are we situated that the average distance between school and school is about forty miles! One is so isolated that its nearest neighbour is seventy-five miles away, and the delegates to our Union meetings sometimes travel more than a hundred

miles! Indeed, until the formation of that Union many a Sunday-school worker in Scotland had never met a teacher from a sister school.

Let us take a rapid glance at the schools in succession.

At *Aberdeen* there are 103 scholars and 10 teachers, and the average attendance over all for the year ending January, 1900, was 78. The senior classes are under the charge of the Rev. Alexander Webster. Excellent work is being done at this northernmost outpost of the faith, but there are difficulties in the way of accommodation and the separation of classes. More class-rooms are urgently needed, and Mr. Webster writes of the need of materials for object lessons, pictures, etc.

At *Dundee* is our strongest school, with 112 scholars, under 13 teachers, and an average attendance of 70 children. The minister, the Rev. Henry Williamson, is and has been for over thirty years an energetic Sunday-school worker, and has had the gratification of seeing many of his old scholars grow up into enthusiastic church members.

The scholars in the *Edinburgh* (St. Mark's Chapel) school number 36, and have 6 teachers. The average attendance is good. Prizes are offered for the best general knowledge of the Bible, and for the best answering in the Bible-class, which is conducted by the Rev. R. B. Drummond, B.A. The minister informs me that there is need of more system in the teaching. A pleasing feature of last session was the attendance of the children once a fort-

¹ The writer is indebted to several kind correspondents for much of the information at his command.

night at the minister's home, where they were instructed in various simple arts, and encouraged to make certain little articles suitable for sale. By the disposal of these articles and the contributions of a few friends, the scholars were enabled to hand over to 'The Children's League of Pity' about £14! Surely an example to be emulated.

Unfortunately the *St. Vincent-street School, Glasgow*, is not strong, partly perhaps owing to the fact that the church has for a considerable time been without a settled minister. The teachers, however, are not without hope of speedy improvement. One capital feature is the morning class of young men and women, which for the past three years has been in the charge of Mr. James Graham (the President of the Scottish Unitarian Association). The attendance averages 17. A printed syllabus is issued and a short address is given on the subject of the day, followed by general conversation. The subjects of past sessions have included studies of selected poems by Tennyson, Lowell, Wordsworth and Browning, 'Spiritual Suggestions from a study of Electrical Science,' lessons from Martineau's 'The Seat of Authority in Religion,' and Sabatier's 'Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion,' and such other subjects as 'Man's Kinship with the Universe,' 'How is Character formed?' 'The Uses of Meditation,' 'Jesus of Nazareth as a Stimulus to the Ideal Life,' etc.

The Rev. E. T. Russell reports that since his settlement at the *South St.*

Mungo Street Church, Glasgow, the Sunday-school has decidedly improved, the average attendance having increased from 20 to 43. This school meets at 11 a.m., and a collection is taken, averaging two shillings per Sunday. A good number attend the Young People's Guild which meets every Tuesday evening, but the Guild is not the means of increasing the attendance on the Sunday.

At *Kirkcaldy* there was a serious decline in the attendance at school about three years ago. We then abolished the classes and inaugurated Sunday afternoon services for the children. Six elders undertook to conduct the services in turn, and they have so improved the attendance that last session we were able to form a promising Minister's Class of about a dozen of the elder scholars, aged from 9 to 15. There are 35 children on the roll with an average attendance of 23 scholars and 5 adults. There is a weekly meeting for the children and their friends, at which poems are learned and recited, exercises performed, simple games indulged in, and singing is practised; but, as at the *South St. Mungo Street* school, this meeting has no influence on the Sunday attendances.

Of *Kilmarnock* I have little knowledge, but I understand that school work there is carried on vigorously.

At most of the Churches children's services are held with more or less frequency; collections are taken at two schools at least; almost every school has a library (each needing more books), and one a savings bank,

With regard to our general position, I believe that during the last eight or ten years our advance has been very slight. There is no disguising the fact that progress in Scotland is slow. The reasons for this are variously given. To begin with, the conditions are vastly different from those prevailing in England; the Scottish people do not seem to be nearly so enthusiastic about Sunday-school work; and here, more frequently than in England, the children attend our church services with their parents, a welcome rather than an unwelcome sign. Then there is the prejudice against us, and the severe social ostracism we have to suffer in most places, rendering it well nigh impossible to secure as scholars the children of parents not directly connected with our churches. In many cases, too, the parents reside a considerable distance from the school, and this militates against the attendance. Some say our slow progress is due to the fact that we are not doctrinal enough, that we attach too little importance to teaching the children the elements of our theological position; others say, 'we have been critics rather than religious teachers; our method has been an appeal to the intellect and not to the spiritual consciousness. This has affected both church and Sunday-school.' It will be conceded that it ought to be the aim of our teachers to train their scholars to be more than little theologians, to purify and elevate their moral aspirations, to inculcate *principles* of action and life, and to

deepen the whole spiritual character. That is the supreme duty of the Sunday-school teacher. At the same time it must be recognised that even theological convictions affect the life and actions of the individual, and that therefore the fundamentals of our liberal and rational faith ought not to be entirely disregarded in the Sunday-school curriculum.

But whatever be the reasons of our tardy advance, we are all hoping great things from the Scottish Unitarian Sunday School Union, an outcome of a conference at Dundee, on 25th November, 1899, the objects of which are 'to promote and encourage union and co-operation among the teachers and friends of Unitarian and other Sunday-schools in Scotland; to afford opportunities of meeting for the discussion and exchange of ideas and experience; and generally to take such action in matters of mutual interest as may from time to time be deemed advisable.' The Union cannot but be of the utmost benefit, even though it only brings us together from our widely-scattered spheres and enables us to gain insight into one another's methods of work. It has already proved that there is no lack of earnestness and enthusiasm among our teachers, and I am convinced that if only we hold on, nothing daunted, though the advance be slow—and after all, the work is one that cannot be gauged by numbers,—we shall have glowing reports to send of faster progress in the years that are to come.

A. E. PARRY.

Sunday School Work in Ireland.

STRICTLY DENOMINATIONAL.

A CHARACTERISTIC of all Sunday-school work in Ireland is that each denomination has its own children to school, and with a very few exceptions which prove the rule, there are no 'unattached' to be attracted. As a general rule, every family in Ireland, however low down in the social scale, has some Church connection. Consequently, the pupils in Sunday-schools under non-subscribing and Unitarian auspices are almost exclusively born in the faith. But, indeed, this condition of things prevails equally in Sunday-schools run by other denominations. Where a child is allowed to attend a Sunday-school under auspices different from the denomination of its parents for the sake of convenience, it is generally removed, as soon as it is able to walk the necessary distance, to a Sunday-school run in harmony with the Church connection of its parents. However, I have known a few cases in which the child found itself in an uncongenial atmosphere in its new spiritual home, and succeeded in getting back to the Unitarian school!

THE THEOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE.

Our Unitarian Sunday-schools, with one or two exceptions, are situated in the counties of Down and Antrim; and in North-East Ulster, where Calvinistic Presbyterianism so strongly predominates, the atmosphere is, so

to speak, intensely Biblical and theological. There is here more than a lingering interest in theological discussion. This characteristic necessarily shapes in part the aim of work in our Unitarian Sunday-schools. It is generally considered absolutely necessary to train our children in Biblical studies and equip them with definite views on theological subjects. The difficulties of this necessary work are only understood by those who have tried to grapple with them. That they have been successfully grappled with in several of our schools I believe; that it has been otherwise in many I am bound to admit.

LEAKAGE AND ITS CURE.

The custom which prevailed in many of our Unitarian Sunday-schools, until quite recent years, of putting the pupils on to read year after year the Four Gospels without comment or explanation (which left the contents of the Gospels in a chaotic heap in their minds), and the absence of definite theological education, were responsible for a considerable leakage of young people from our body, when a change of residence, say to Belfast, removed them from the associations of the old country meeting-house. Certainly no complaint is oftener heard among our intelligent laity than that the children of our body in the past were not sufficiently instructed in Unitarian views. This must not be interpreted to mean a desire on their part that our children should be made into sectarian bigots,

but rather that they should be so grounded in the principles of liberal Christianity that they might find therein a faith acceptable to the reason and sustaining to their spiritual and moral life—a faith which should arouse a natural enthusiasm and an uplifting fidelity, and establish them securely against the terrors of Calvinism which meet them aggressively at every turn. It has been generally felt that, if this happy result was to be attained, our young people must be trained in the principles of their faith, and be able to give a reason for the faith that is in them, and on which they are so often challenged.

SOME DIFFICULTIES.

Certain difficulties stood in the way of this important work, some of which, however, are gradually disappearing.

(1) Our average teachers had not an intelligent view of the Bible as a literature; they held the view for the most part that the Bible was the ultimate seat of authority for religion. They had not reached the higher ground that Bibles have been written because man is naturally a religious being, and finds the evidence of religion in the convictions and aspirations of the individual soul. Until quite recently the results of the comparatively modern science of textual criticism had not reached our average Sunday school teacher. But we must remember that some lapse of time was necessary for the development and spread of rational views of the Bible.

(2) Our teachers were not, and are not yet, adequately equipped with suitable text-books to aid them in their work. The publications of the London Sunday School Association have met this want splendidly; but, alas! they have not yet got into the hands of our teachers to any extent.

(3) Our children do not remain long enough at our Sunday-schools to make it possible to give them a sound introduction to Biblical studies and the discussion of theological problems.

(4) Further, the system of elementary national education in Ireland, while it relieved our Sunday-school teachers many years ago of the necessity of teaching reading and writing, failed woefully in the training of the intellect or the development of the moral consciousness, and thus an additional difficulty, arising from the undeveloped minds of the children, was thrown in the way of Sunday-school work in Ireland. We know that the system was deliberately planned by the Government Department in Dublin so as to de-nationalize the youth of Ireland, to keep them ignorant of the history of the country and of its literature, and as far as possible free from any consciousness that they had a country at all. But whether or not it was also deliberately planned so as to prevent any intellectual development, this we know: that if a child emerged from the monotonous, dry-as-dust, iron-bound curriculum with any tendency to use its mind for thinking with, it was in spite of the system and not

because of it! It consisted mainly in learning by rote badly expressed rules of English grammar, which the poor child was not taught how to apply; lists of names of towns, rivers, and especially peninsulas; mechanical reading of unsuitable prose and poetry without any adequate effort to impart the meaning—a cruel loading of the memory without any training of the intellect. This year the results' system has been abolished and a new programme, still in a very chaotic condition, has been introduced. So let us hope that ten years hence the National-school system will furnish the Sunday-school teacher with something better than unthinking, unresponsive, speechless pupils, rendered as stupid as a stupid system of education could make them!

OUR BULK, EQUIPMENTS, AND METHODS.

I find the last statistics show us to possess thirty-five schools, with 1,506 pupils and 174 teachers. Of these only 235 pupils are returned as over sixteen years of age. Twenty-two libraries and twelve meetings of teachers are mentioned. In a few cases special school-houses with classrooms have been built. As a rule, we use a school-house, built in connection with our congregations for National-school purposes. They are poorly furnished, pictures and other signs of art being deplorably absent. In some cases the Sunday-school is held in the meeting-house. An address to the whole school is the exception rather

than the rule. We think it better to use the time in school for class instruction and to train the children to come to the church for their preaching. The teaching of singing being so much neglected in day-schools, the singing is not so good as it might be in our Sunday-schools, especially in country districts. Moreover, we have not yet recovered in Ulster from the blighting influence of Puritanism on Church music.

A NECESSARY CHANGE.

Parents do not complain that their children are not very well up in Latin literature or science when they leave school at the age of fourteen or fifteen. Why should they expect them to be versed in Hebrew and Christian literature and able to discuss theology when they cease attending Sunday-school and the Young People's Bible class at the age of fifteen or sixteen? The pernicious nonsense that, when a boy or girl reaches sixteen years of age, attendance at the advanced Bible class is beneath the dignity of their years, must be put an end to. They are only then beginning to be capable of receiving the tuition that they sometimes complain in later life they did not get.

HOW TO GET TEACHERS.

Many whom our ministers and superintendents consider competent to be Sunday-school teachers seem unwilling to take up the work. I believe it is not so much unwillingness to aid as ignorance of what to do and how to

do it. That deters many intelligent and conscientious people from becoming teachers. This difficulty could be easily met. If our Sunday-school libraries were furnished properly with a specimen copy of all the hand-books published by the Sunday School Association, Essex Hall, London, and the superintendent would consider the requirements of the class for which he needs a teacher, and decide on, say, a couple or three suitable text-books, and go to the man or woman he has spotted for the work, produce these books and explain away the difficulties, he would seldom fail to enlist the needed aid.

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY.

With the universal interest in Biblical references in Ulster the Bible should have a great future in our Unitarian Sunday schools as *the* text-book from which the accomplished teacher can give the elements of a good literary as well as a religious education. From it he can draw lessons in the gradual development of all theological conceptions and ethical sentiments (Mr. Wicksteed's 'Lessons on the Growth of Moral and Spiritual Ideas' will help him). By the aid of the Bible he can train his pupils in the historic sense, in the art of literary appreciation, and in the science of textual criticism. All this is possible, and should be an invaluable adjunct to what is rightly regarded as the supreme aim of Sunday school work, viz., the development of the spiritual

life and the awakening of the moral consciousness of the pupils. I have sometimes thought that the Sunday School Committee of the Association of Irish Non-subscribing Presbyterians and other Free Christians should institute an annual or bi-annual inspection of our Sunday-schools by men and women who have made some study of Sunday-school work. Such visits should result in a valuable comparison of methods and an exchange of valuable suggestions.

A SYSTEM OF GRADUATED LESSONS.

It may be of interest to give the under-noted extract from the published report of the Moneyrea Sunday-school, as it sets forth in detail the programme of work during this year, the aims in view, and the text-books the teachers look to for aid, although they seldom use the same text-book two years in succession.

'The classes were reorganized at the beginning of the session, as our custom is every two years, and an attempt was made to institute more regularly graduated lessons in the various classes to ensure the pupils the benefits of progressive instruction without any unnecessary overlapping of tuition in any one subject. The largest class in the school is the infants' class, numbering twenty-four pupils. It is in charge of Miss ——— who has devoted much study to the difficult task of imparting first lessons in religion to the child mind by the simple illustration of religious truths in hymns and texts of scripture, by teaching the little ones suitable prayers, and the inculcation of simple moral lessons. [Text books: vols. of S.S. Helper, 'Do the Right,' by A. L. C., Beard's 'Ten Lessons,' 'Short Stories'

(Bowie), 'Flock at the Fountain,' etc.] Miss ——— takes the second class in more continuous selected readings from scripture and the illustration of the parables; ['Book of Beginnings,' 'The Story of Jesus' (The Misses Gregg), 'Half-hours with the Parables' (Hirst), 'New Parables' (Macrae), 'Short Stories' (Bowie).]

Miss ——— devotes herself to making her pupils acquainted with the text of the scriptures both by reading and learning by rote, and the understanding of its lessons. She has also taken her pupils through Gannett's book on 'The Childhood of Jesus.' In these three junior classes hymns are learned and their meaning expounded. Miss ——— has aimed at giving the fourth class some idea of the beginnings and growth of religious ideas and religious literature, as a useful preparation for the senior Bible class, and has also imparted some instruction on Unitarian views and on the lives of eminent Unitarians. [Text books: 'Lessons on the Title Page of an English Bible' (Millson), 'Our Unitarian Faith' (Marriott), 'Theodore Parker,' 'Channing,' 'Great Lives,' and 'Dorothea Dix,' by Fr. Cooke, 'In Search of Truth.'] The Superintendent was set free for the fuller oversight of the school by Mr. ——— taking the senior class on Sunday mornings, while the Rev. ——— started a course of Wednesday evening lectures on New Testament subjects. These lectures have now run for three months, and have already covered all the subjects suggested by the advent of Jesus and the whole course of his Galilean ministry. Mr. ——— has discoursed to the senior class on Sunday mornings on a series of subjects under the title of 'The Truths and Errors of Orthodoxy,' suggested by Dr. Freeman Clarke's book of that name. . . He has endeavoured generally to inculcate the positive principles of Liberal Christianity and the habits and thought prevailing among Unitarians on sacred subjects.'

RICHARD LYTTLE.

A French Sunday School Fête.

By the kindness of Prof. Bonet-Maury, whose name has long been familiar to Unitarians in this country, we are able to give a sketch of the Annual Meeting of *La Société des Ecoles du Dimanche de France*, which took place in Paris last May, and which, being of a special character, is not without suggestiveness. It is particularly interesting to observe that the Society's operations extend to schools attached to all shades of Protestant belief, including heterodox as well as orthodox. The sketch is based on the forty-eighth report of the Society.

A prefatory note informs us that this year's gathering differed from ordinary usage, uniting the features of a Scholars' Fête with the annual meeting of the subscribers. The writer of the report says:—

It was a success all round, our Fête at the Oratoire, thanks to the organizing skill of our good *Agent-Général*, thanks to the gathering brought together there by the superintendents and teachers of the schools of Paris and the district, thanks to the selected speakers who so well discharged their task, thanks to the children who sang so well, listened well and applauded well; and thanks, above all, to the Heavenly Father who gave us a beautiful day unclouded by any untoward accident.

Forty-two schools, combining the children of all (Protestant) denominations, had responded to our invita-

tion.¹ The children were divided into nine groups, each of about a hundred scholars. Each group had its special colour; badges of the same tint as the entrance tickets enabled each school on entering by the great door of the Oratoire to discern at once the division of the nave where its places were reserved. Each group had at its head an attendant to see the teachers and scholars properly placed.

The great nave of the Oratoire and the galleries filled with children made a charming spectacle. National flags decorated the building; others held in the hands of the boys were raised and waved to time while the following verse of M. Decoppet's patriotic song was sung:—

We love thy flag, of which the joyous hue
Tells all the world the deeds thy heroes do;
This sacred sign, thy genius to our eye,
Brings to thy name renown 'neath every sky.

To illustrate the following couplet:—

We love thy story, where the pages tell
What greatness crowned thee and what
storms befel,—

the young people in the semi-circular gallery of the choir of the church held aloft tri-colour bannerets on which were inscribed in letters of gold and silver the names of St. Louis, Joan of Arc, Duguesclin, Bayard, Calvin, Palissy, Jeanne d' Albret, and Rabaut. This appeal to the names of the greatest

personages of the land and of Protestantism, combined in equal honour and love, assuredly had a great effect upon the young audience, and inculcated upon them by an admirable 'object lesson' the conviction that 'Protestant' and 'French' are terms which, far from excluding each other, are mutually complementary.

The speeches were brief and interesting. Our good President had the difficult task of presenting the annual report to an assembly chiefly composed of children. It will be seen by the text of his speech how well he succeeded. M. Decoppet spoke to his young audience on 'The Flag,'—a subject peculiarly appropriate to the Fête.

Not having the text of the third address in our hands,—that of M. Edouard Sautter—we will give a brief *résumé* of it, though that is no easy matter. To appreciate a speech of the kind one must hear the speaker, and above all one must see him. As soon as he began to speak, you could see the heads of the children turn towards him and their eyes grow bright. It was because he understood his audience, and knew what would attract their attention and remain permanently fixed in their memory. No one knows so well as he how to tell a story,—a story that does not always end with 'a moral,' far from it! But don't be afraid; no one will imbibe the notion of imitating the little touches of mischief which Mons. E. Sautter brought in so cleverly.

¹ The list shows that twenty-six belonged to the Reformed churches, Lutherans claimed four, the Free Church four, Methodists two, Baptists three, Independents two, and the People's Church (*Populaires*) one.

'A Good Idea'—that was the subject of his address. Did they have a good idea or not, those two brothers of an inventive turn of mind, who thought one day of giving themselves the treat of a *fire*? Oh! it was not a fire of their father's house, but only of a little heap about a foot high piled upon the floor of their room. But the fire, once begun, didn't think fit to stop; and if father had not come in the nick of time the house would have been destroyed. Was that a really 'good idea'? Certainly not.

But if anyone has had a 'good idea' it is surely the minister, the friend of children, who by degrees has attained to the achievement of sending more than a thousand every year into the country to regain health during the summer. (On this, loud applause to that excellent friend of the little ones, M. Lorriaux, who, however, would not take this tribute to himself, but claimed the greater part of it for Mme. Lorriaux. Still louder applause, louder and prolonged. The little hands clap with might and main.)

They had a 'good idea,' those children who got up a flower mission for the sick and neglected; and each one is exhorted to give up his stick of chocolate four or five times a week, so that he may give something to this work.

Yes, and who was He who had nothing but 'good ideas,' who instead of tedious sermons told pretty stories, and who knew always how to find a way to relieve the distressed?

Let them all imitate Him, and have 'good ideas,' but really *good* ones,—thus the speaker 'drove home the nail,' and fixed the lesson for ever in their heads, and what is better, in their hearts.

THE FRENCH SOCIETY'S WORK.

The President's address on the occasion referred to was as follows:—

Take pity on me, my dear children! It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to preside over this meeting, but I must confess that my pleasure is a little spoiled by being obliged to open this Fête with inflicting upon you a speech and a report. Everybody knows that speeches and reports are amongst the most tiresome things. If there had only been one of the two, it might be borne. But the two together! A speech *and* a report! A speech doubled by a report! It is too much, and more than one amongst you is tempted to run away—or go to sleep.

Reassure yourself,—I shall not give you time! Strictly speaking, I could put my speech into three words: 'Welcome to you!' and my report into three others: 'All goes well.' But there are people who would find this too dry and unsatisfying; and there are others who would rebuke me for spoiling the office of President by making too little of the part I have to perform. I will add a little, therefore, by way of 'seasoning.'

I begin with the speech. I wish a cordial welcome to all of you in this old 'temple' of the Oratoire, and I do

so in the name of the ministers who have kindly put it at our disposal, especially of our excellent friend M. Decoppet, and in the name of the committee of the 'Sunday School Society' which has had the pleasure of inviting you. I have no need to explain why we are not holding our Fête in the Trocadero as three years ago. We could not dream of competing for the Palace with the visitors to the Exhibition. Nor were we able in this 'temple,' so much less than the great hall of the Trocadero, to gather all the children of all the Sunday schools of Paris. Each of them, therefore, has been able only to send a limited number of delegates. It is a pity, but apart from this inconvenience, which is a serious one, we are glad to feel ourselves at home, in our own Protestant Cathedral; and the religious character of our Fête will be the less open here to adverse criticism.

[The President, Mons. M. L. Sautter, proceeded to speak of his predecessor in that office, M. le pasteur Paumier—who had been a member of the committee since the Society was formed in 1852, and who died last year after being President since 1876. He was an indefatigable servant of the cause, giving toil, time and means to secure and diffuse the various publications suitable for the schools, and in every way furthering their interests. He commended the memory of this venerable friend of the schools to every scholar, and then proceeded]:—

I have finished my speech and come

to my report. 'What's the use?' perhaps you will say; 'we will let you off.' Alas! I have no power to let myself off, and I will try to show you why. Perhaps one of you has asked, or asks some Thursday afternoon, his parents' permission to go to the Exhibition. 'Yes,' they say, 'you are a sensible boy, and as we cannot go with you to-day you shall go alone. Here is a ticket and half-a-crown which will enable you to see some of the attractions which you will meet with. Only, when you come home, you must give us an account of what you have seen and how you have spent your money.' You cordially accept, and you find it both natural and pleasant to tell, on your return, the experiences of the day. Well, that's what we call a 'report;' and that is just what I am going to give in the presence of the friends of the Sunday School Society who have given money for its work, and to whom the committee should account for the way it has been used. I am not sorry that you should hear my report, and that you should be able, if needed, to give some account in your turn to your parents. Try to imagine that I know some excellent friends, very respectable people, who ask me from time to time 'What is the use of the Sunday School Society?' I explain to them without reluctance as well as I can; they go away perfectly convinced of the great usefulness of our Society. Yet these very people cannot refrain from putting the same question to me six months later: 'What is the use of the Sunday

School Society?' Now, that proves two things: first, that it is not children alone that have stupid heads and who forget; and secondly, that one must go on saying and repeating things that are true.

Children, you shall judge. Is it any use to have a list of lessons for the Sunday school, so arranged that the principal narratives of the Old Testament come under your eyes during one period of two years, and those of the New Testament during another period of two years? Is it useful that the explanations of these lessons or means of preparation to explain them to you should be offered to your teachers?

Is it any use that interesting, instructive, and nicely illustrated leaflets should be distributed every Sunday to Sunday scholars, and taken home by them either as a memento of the lesson just heard or as a note of next Sunday's lesson?

Well then, the Sunday School Society does this. It selects the list of lessons, and it publishes the explanations, with the accompaniment of very interesting articles, in a charming magazine with a pink cover, which has subscribers in all parts of France to the number of 2,700, but which will, I hope, soon have many more. 25,000 cards and pictures are distributed annually by its means to that number of Sunday scholars, among whom many, who would be too poor to pay for them, receive them more or less gratuitously.

Do you like your little hymn-book? Is it nice to have it reviewed from

time to time, corrected and enriched by new hymns? You owe it to the Sunday School Society, which has prepared a new edition of it this year.

[And thus the President continued, drawing attention to magic-lantern slides, grants to poor schools, teachers' conferences and lessons, and other branches of the Society's work. He added statistics showing that 1200 schools exist, with 7000 teachers and 67,000 scholars—which he well said were not '*quantités négligeables*.' The expenses were about £1200, and exceeded the receipts by over £100. By means of a 'sale,' however, the funds have been enriched by some £240, so that the Society is well-off at present. Apologising for having fallen into a panegyric of the Society, the President said]:—

Allow me to add once more that the best way of rendering service to it is not to repeat what I have just said, if you have paid attention (of which I am not quite sure), but to be punctual, faithful and attentive pupils of your Sunday-school, and to learn there to love and serve the Saviour. 'A tree is known by its fruits,' said Jesus Christ. If the Sunday-school makes you more pious children, more docile, more affectionate, more patient, braver, in one word more like our divine model, that will be the most convincing proof of the use of Sunday schools, and the best testimonial that can be given to the Society that cares for them and promotes their extension.

'How I Prepare.'



THE following notes are by practical teachers, who at the Editor's request have sent these 'confessions.'

Of course, the reader may not find in any of them exactly the method suited to his own case; but it is most improbable that he will fail altogether in his search for useful hints. If his way is a better, by all means let him keep to it; but let us hope he has one of some sort, and is not one of the kind indicated in the preliminary 'confession,' which shows how a certain teacher does *not* 'prepare.'

How I do not Prepare.

It is with feelings of shame, which not even the Editor's promise to hide my name can prevent, that I force myself to this confession. I can only hope that it may lead to true penitence, and that when I see myself—or, rather, my shortcomings—exposed in cold print, I may be stung into more earnest efforts to amend them. If it be true, as I am told, that other teachers in different parts of the country are tempted by the same influences and fall into the same faults, I may possibly serve as a warning to them, as they read their own case in mine.

It is true I reckon myself a teacher,

but on looking at some of my so-called 'lessons' I am afraid there has been very little teaching about them. Sometimes I have been so disgusted with them myself that I have felt like giving the whole thing up. It was no fault of mine that I got enrolled among the teachers. I was drawn into it before I saw how much it meant, and I think it is rather a pity to smuggle one into the business as some superintendents do. They are at their wits' end, I suppose, to get help of any kind, and so they make light of the work—'it's only for an hour,' or perhaps less—'you've only to keep the youngsters quiet and read them something out of the Bible or any good book you choose.' That is what they say at times; and though my own case was not quite so bad as this, I believe I should have done better if our minister—who is a good specimen on the whole—had taken us young folks in hand at first and told us how to set about it.

I can't plead total ignorance, however, for since I began some years have rolled by; and we have had the usual meetings in our school and district, and as I confess I like the society of my fellow-teachers, I have generally attended and heard the papers and discussions. Besides, I have a look through our denominational paper now and then; and some of the reported addresses seem to me to be very good, at the time. And then I have several of the books issued by the S.S.A.—I don't know what I should have done

without them; I have done badly enough with them!

But the fact is there is so much to take one's time now-a-days. Of course there is the day's work to be done, and one has to look alive to keep up with the times—at least I have, and I suppose a good many more besides. Then I don't believe in all work and no play, so I reckon to have some time to myself every day, when, according to the weather or other circumstances, I go for a ride, or a game, or call on an old chum or two, or settle down to a book from the library, or amuse myself with a bit of a hobby of one sort or another. Now and then something turns up that takes up the whole of the evening, and it is bed-time before I have had time to turn round. I daresay all this is far from interesting to anybody else, but I can't help saying it, as it really is not all my own fault that I don't 'prepare,' though I know I ought to.

I feel all the while that *Sunday afternoon is coming*. The last Sunday afternoon, as a rule, I came away down the hill with my mind made-up to get really ready for next lesson. But one week is like another, only more so; and as the fatal hour draws near I am usually as little prepared as ever. My Saturday afternoons are generally filled up to the brim, and if there does come a slack one, it seems so stupid to get out a piece of paper and put notes on it, while people are talking all about you, or when you feel like going for a good walk more than like studying.

So the Sunday morning comes, and as the rule of the house permits, I generally have my sleep out on the one day in the week when I can. I know I should do better if I got up an hour earlier and got something done, and I shouldn't be so grumpy at breakfast, probably, if I did. But—since you will have the truth—I look on Sunday as my day of rest, and so do all our folks except —, but he's an exception to every rule. I don't pretend to be half as good he is. [!—Editor.]

Sometimes while the morning service is on—if I get there in time—I pick a bit out of the Bible readings, or a special verse in a hymn may strike me, but I don't get much out of the sermon as a rule. It doesn't consist at all of 'milk for babes.'

And so Sunday afternoon comes round, and there I am, *generally* early, and the late children drop in just as usual when I am settling which book to send for from the cupboard.

. . . . No, sir; I shall not describe one of my 'specimen lessons,' as you suggest. Allow me to say they are 'indescribable.'

As for the youngsters—well, they usually do what I should do if my teacher tried it on with me in the same way.

There—now I have written it out, I am even more ashamed than when I began, which I hope is a good sign. I think I *can* do better.

I am sure I'll try.

*

Senior Class of Lads. Ages 16-18.

'How *my Class and I* prepare,' by your leave, Mr. Editor, for this more accurately describes what follows.

In the first place, then, I am a strong advocate of the course as opposed to the isolated lesson. Secondly, I am an advocate of the 'simmered' course, and the simmered lesson. The course on which we are now engaged was roughly sketched out at the beginning of this year, *i.e.*, just nine months ago. The lesson which I gave this afternoon was brought to the boil after a fortnight's simmer. Our present course is 'The Unitarian Faith,' for some of us attend the church services pretty regularly, and I think all are interested to know something of the main points of Faith for which our church stands. My first task is to decide how the subject is to be divided, and, after a reference to a few books on Unitarianism, I adopt the division laid down by Dr. Brooke Herford, in 'The Main Lines of Religion as held by Unitarians,' *i.e.*, (1) Belief in Man. (2) Belief in God.

I begin with the Belief in Man, and set down what this belief implies. I find it implies

(1) That man is not fallen, but slowly rising, and that the Garden of Eden is a myth.

(2) That man's past has been in the main an advance—physically, mentally, and morally.

(3) That the past gives assurance of a future that shall be still grander.

These form the basis of my first three lessons. My next we are preparing for next Sunday, and is entitled (4) Belief in Man's Faculties.

How are we preparing this lesson? I sketched it in outline last week. It seemed to fall naturally into three parts—

(i.) What is the argument against trusting our Reason and Conscience, and how is this argument met by Unitarians?

(ii.) Can the experience of the past assist us to a solution?

(iii.) When a creature despises his nature, does he not blaspheme his Creator?

I now take three cards—a large blank visiting card is what I use—and write as follows:—

On the first: (1) Are the senses, and reason, and conscience always safe guides?

(2) Can we live without trusting their evidence?

On the second: (1) Man has advanced in the past, like a train, along two lines—Reason and Conscience.

(2) Is it wise to leave these, and try a new road,—such as 'blind faith'?

On the third: (1) The Parable of the Talents. (*Matt.* xxv., 14-30.)

(2) A 'talent' was a weight of gold worth about £600.

These cards I gave this afternoon, after school, one each to three of my class, with a word or two of explanation, that from the first I expected, next Sunday, a good example of our

Senses deceiving us, of Reason being wrong, of Conscience being faulty; from the second a thought about man's advance by reasoning, and the sense of right; from the third the story of the parable.

In my own note-book, I make the following notes for my lesson next Sunday:—

Lesson IV. Sept. 23rd.

Man's Reason and Conscience.

1. This belief is one of the fundamentals of Unitarianism.

2. Our faculties sometimes mislead us, but must be trusted, with reservations:—

Examples:

(a) A 'mirage' in the desert.

(b) That the world cannot be round, or everything would fall off.

(c) The burning of heretics.

3. The past shows man's glorious advance, through—

(a) Reason: Diseases attacked and stamped out.

(b) Conscience: Slavery abolished.

4. The Parable of the Talents.

The 'unprofitable servant' says—'my reason was weak, my conscience was erroneous, so I distrusted them, and took a Pope, a priest, and a few texts from the Bible as my guides in life.'—

These notes would, of course, be much abbreviated, and yet be intelligible to their author. It will be seen that the aim which I constantly keep before me in this lesson is the exaltation of Reason and Conscience as the sacred channels through which God leads man onward and upward. Next Sun-

day, I shall get a little, but not much, help from my class. To conclude, I want a few lines of poetry to express this faith nobly. This time, it is Browning's—

'God's gift was that man should conceive
of truth,
And yearn to gain it, catching at mistake,
As midway help till he reach fact indeed.'

This verse I 'hektograph' into the note-books opposite the page on which the lads will take down semi-dictated notes on the lesson next Sunday. This scheme involves an hour's work indoors, and a good many half-hours on the tops of omnibuses.

* *

Girls' Class. Ages 10-12.

I SET apart a fixed time for preparation in the week. This is essential! No time fixed means no preparation, and no lesson. Whilst one is a novice one may need an hour or more; later one can prepare in half the time.

Preparation time having arrived, take down and open your text-book, the thread on which your lessons hang. (When a novice I worked through *St. Matthew*.) Find the place where you left off, read the next passage, decide if it contains a lesson fit for your class; and if it does, deal with it in the following way. Suppose the passage is *St. Matt.* viii., 1-4—the cure of the leper. The following points are clear;—

(1) A man so diseased that he contaminates unwillingly all he meets.

(2) His desire to be cured causes him to face possible rebuff and humble himself before Jesus. 'Worship' including his intention to love and serve his master in the future.

(3) Jesus cures him without reproof, and desires him to be silent about it.

Your lesson may, therefore, be two-headed.

(a) Repent. One cannot be bad without making others bad.

(b) Repentance means humbling yourself and intending to love and serve God for the future. You will meet with no rebuff.—

Study next to make a salad to cause this joint to be acceptable; you cannot throw it thus baldly at the class. Work out a scheme, therefore, to catch the class's attention. The catching is accomplished by appealing to the most prominent general characteristics of the children, either their capacity to wonder, to appreciate humour, or failing all else their knowledge of recent local events or peculiarities of their district. But the scheme should disclose to their minds, through one or other of these means, the first head of your lesson, that bad influences must produce countless others by mere contact. The methods of seclusion of lepers in old and present days (and information of some sort in a lesson is like yeast to bread, and you must constantly read extensively to get this information) lead up to the leper's story, which

you tell, and fix on the children's minds with a picture of the incident. The picture, if well chosen, makes your points for you; the leper kneeling in his humility and desire to be clean; Jesus stopping on his journey in his willingness to hear and help him, despite his disease.

What a marked difference there is between the good man, so anxious to serve mankind that he fears no contamination and desires no praise, and the diseased man so loathsome and death-dealing. Yet both are men, and the diseased man, being now clean again, may try to be as good a man as the other—and in the same way, by serving mankind.

Search now for a story illustrating your points—say of a bad man or woman, shocked suddenly by the sin of a loved one, who has but copied their example. The bad man struggles to be good in order to reclaim his loved one; finds that repentance means service and love, is no good without; finds that service in reclaiming the lost one saves his own soul, and makes him a Christ-like man.

Having made a short note of the main heads of your lesson, it is now necessary (at any rate whilst still a novice) to rehearse it from beginning to end as if the class were before you. This is tedious at first, and causes your preparation to last an hour or more; but it is essential, because it is only thus that you discover ideas and illustrations most attractive to your particular class of child, to say

nothing of weak points in your argument; and only thus that you drive your headings so well into your head that you can deal effectively with interruptions which arise in the course of the delivery of the lesson, and even occasionally turn them into additional illustrations of your main theme.

Later on, when by practice you are able at will to see the whole lesson in your mind's eye and test it without any rehearsal at all; and when by keeping a book with a separate page for each child in the class, in which you enter all their sayings and doings, you come to know them individually so well that the right illustration to catch their attention springs immediately to your mind; you will not regret the tedious rehearsals which taught you to speak without notes or books, and give an effective lesson without more than half-an-hour's preparation one night in the week.

* * *

Girls' Class. Ages 13-16.

I FIND it most satisfactory to read straight through some book, a chapter or less each week, and I like to read the portion I think suitable for the next Sunday on Tuesday evening. I keep it in abeyance until Saturday evening, when I read it again and learn what I can in reference to it from any likely book in the house. The extent of my research depends chiefly on the time I am able to

devote to it on this my only leisure evening of the week.

I have gone through a number of books in this way, including the Rev. Richard Armstrong's 'Outline Lessons,' Miss Sara Wood's 'Gift of Life,' Mr. Richard Bartram's 'Genesis' and 'Stories from the Life of Moses,' and most of the 'Three Cousins' 'Short Sermons.'

Mr. Clodd's books, 'The Childhood of the World' and 'The Childhood of Religion,' are very useful for reference. We have not had the above books *in class* except for short extracts in some cases.

Miss Gillie's 'Lessons on Religion,' the Misses Gregg's 'Life of Jesus,' the Rev. J. T. Marriott's 'Our Unitarian Faith,' the Rev. W. G. Tarrant's 'Our Faith,' Mr. Hirst's 'Half-hours with the Parables,' Miss Frances E. Cooke's 'Story of Theodore Parker,' the Rev. H. W. Hawkes' 'Man of Nazareth,' Mr. Charles Tylor's 'Memorial of John Wycliffe,' the Book of Acts (with the aid of the Rev. W. G. Tarrant's 'Lessons on the Early Christians' in the 'Sunday School Helper,' 1887); and Chapters of the Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter's 'Life in Palestine when Jesus lived'—these books were all read through in the class.

After reading this list of books, I am afraid you think we are a very scholastic class, but you are mistaken; we are quite the reverse.

I think the Sunday-school should be as little as possible like the week-day

school, although there must be perfect order in the classes or the children will not enjoy their afternoon as they should.

Sunday-school—I would take the second word away and alter the first into Sabbath: *Day of the heart's rest*. This is the day I always try to make my children feel they are having; therefore we have no competition or rivalry of any kind on this one day of the week.

They have never been tired out with any lesson. I like them to be as fresh at the end of the afternoon as at the beginning, so we usually finish with a story.

I do not think any one ought to teach in the Sunday-school who does not enjoy the work.

NOTES OF LESSON.

The Leper Cleansed.

Read *II. Kings* v. 1—14.

Leprosy was formerly known in England as well as in other parts of Europe.

Maud, often called Matilda, wife of Henry I., founded a home or hospital for lepers. It was called a Lazar House, and was adjoining St. Giles's Church, Cripplegate. (Lazar, so called after Lazarus in the New Testament. Cripplegate, so called, perhaps, because it was very usual for lepers to become cripples.)

The sufferers were not allowed to associate with the congregation, but a hole was made in the wall so that they might hear the service. Leprosy died

out in England about the fifteenth century, probably owing to the more cleanly habits of the people and the discontinuance of the very long fasts which had been so strictly enforced by the priests, when, meat being prohibited, the people lived on fish a great deal; the fish, often improperly cured, was unwholesome, and rendered the people very unhealthy.

Remember these ‘Four Rules of Health’ :—

1. *Wash yourselves*, in order that the pores of the skin shall not become stopped up and useless.

2. *Eat good plain food*. Get up in time to have a good wash and a good breakfast, and there will be far less danger of your catching any disease, infectious (in the air) or contagious (by contact).

3. *Avoid bad smells*. See that the traps and plugs in bath, area, etc., are kept in their places. It is not sufficient to use disinfectants, chloride of lime, etc.; the only effectual way is to do away with the smell.

4. *Keep your mouth shut*. We are intended to breathe through our noses. The nose is formed in such a way that the dirt and dust in the air shall not readily get to our lungs.

If we disregard this provision and breathe through our mouths, we shall swallow the dirt and dust in the air, which no one would like to do if he thought of it, especially on a foggy day, when the atmosphere is full of soot from the smoke which cannot rise.

By attending to these rules, which

even a 'little maid' can remember and practise and tell others, a good deal of the sickness of the world would be removed. That is how we can work wonders in our day, and enjoy this beautiful world.

* * * *

Girls' Class. Average age 13.

IN preparing notes for a Sunday school lesson, the first point I set myself to decide is the subject—whether it shall be a Bible reading, a poem, a story, myth or legend, or incident I have read in the papers or heard from companions, or seen in the streets or country.

[For instance, I choose for a subject the story of Joan of Arc.]

When I have chosen the subject, I determine the aims of the lesson—which are usually twofold, first setting out the actual story or reading, and secondly the moral to be drawn from it.

[The aims of the above subject would be (1) to tell the story of Joan of Arc, and (2) to point out from her example how active faith and trust in God will help us in life.]

Then I prepare a few questions which will arouse the children's interest in the subject I am taking for my lesson, and such that will treat of a subject already familiar to them. In a course of lessons on the same subject the questions will recapitulate the preceding lesson.

[For instance, in the story of Joan of Arc, 'What are the dangers of being

near a foreign country? If an enemy invaded England, what would the English do? What is necessary to make the soldiers act together? What is the nearest foreign country to England? What English kings made war against France? What was the result of Henry V.'s conquests in France? When the English king had been crowned king of France, what would the French people do?']

After these questions I make the notes for the new lesson, writing down the chief points and a few details, so that I may have them at my fingers' ends, and enter thoroughly into the children's minds.

LESSON: *Joan of Arc.*

[I want you to imagine yourselves in France when Henry VI. of England was crowned king of France, whilst the French king lived in one of his castles without the power to rule. (What would be the feelings of the French people under these circumstances?) The French were sick and tired of the war, but there was no man ready to encourage them to take up arms and make a strong stand against their conquerors. (In what ways is a country harmed by war?) A peasant family of the name of d'Arc lived in the village of Domremy near the wooded hills of the Vosges. Like other maidens of her rank, Joan learnt to spin and sew, and kept the sheep for her father. She loved to be alone and brood over the Bible stories and the legends of the saints until they became very real to her. She mourned with prayers and

tears for the sorrows of down-trodden France, until even these prayers became real and returned to her with form and sound as messages from heaven. One summer's day, thus dreaming and thinking of these things, she saw a light among the trees, and there appeared to her the angel Michael, clothed in armour, and the angel whispered her heavenly mission to go forth and save her country. At that time a prophecy was current that the kingdom, lost by a woman, should be saved by a peasant girl of Lorraine. With these thoughts and visions always uppermost in her mind, she at length decided to go forth and undertake the mission. As she sat spinning with her mother, Joan said, 'I had much rather rest here and spin, for this is no work of my choosing; but I must go and do it, for my Lord wills it.' Her story at first was laughed to scorn, but her persistence bore down all opposition, and she succeeded in getting to the French Prince and convincing him of her sincerity. She put on a man's dress and a suit of white armour, mounted a black charger, bearing a banner of her own device—white, embroidered with lilies—on one side a picture of God enthroned on clouds; on the other the shield of France, supported by two angels. Thus equipped, she led forth her army towards Orleans, then besieged by the enemies. Her arrival encouraged the French, and the rough and hardened soldiers left off their oaths and ill-habits under the spell of her pure presence. In the fight she was wounded

trying to scale a wall, and was carried into a vineyard, but cried to the soldiers, 'Wait awhile, eat and drink; when my standard touches the wall you shall enter the fort.' At length the English were obliged to retreat, and Joan and her army entered the city triumphant. From this time the French felt a new enthusiasm, and with Joan as their leader beat back the English from fortress to fortress. The French king was crowned at Rheims. But still Joan felt her mission incomplete, and accompanied the French army in their marches and fights against the English. In a fight near Paris, Joan was left behind by her men and taken prisoner, and sold by a Frenchman to the English. She was thought to be a witch and sorceress, and was put in prison and tried. For nearly a year she lay in prison—brutally treated and cruelly questioned and insulted. Through a whole year's imprisonment and harsh treatment her whole comfort and strength was in God; that alone made life bearable. At length the trial was over, and she was doomed to death. A pyre of faggots was built in the market-place, and Joan was tied to the stake. Calm and resigned she stood there till the torch set light to the faggots, and the flames and smoke leapt up around her. At the warm touch of the fire she cried out 'Jesus,' and one of the English soldiers looking on, seeing how pure and innocent she looked during the ordeal, cried out, 'O God, we are lost; we have burned a saint!']

After making notes on the lesson, I prepare a few questions and summarize the chief points.

[*Example.* What sort of life did Joan of Arc lead at home? What mission did she resolve to undertake? Whom did she feel was her great help and guide in her work? What did Joan do for her country? How was she treated in prison? Why did the English try her? What was the result of the trial?]

When I have prepared these questions, I turn to the last and most important step of the lesson, that of applying the moral and religious element of the lesson to our own selves and life as it is now.

[*Example.* We see that from her faith and trust in God, Joan of Arc was inspired to undertake her mission of freeing her country, and at the same time drew comfort from Him in her troubles. The open sky and country, beautiful trees and hills, strengthened Joan's faith in the power of the Unseen; but also in the fights, in her prison cell with the insults and mockery she had to bear, it was none the less real, but ever present and active. Here in London we see little more than houses and streets, narrow ways and busy traffic, and the thoughts of a higher life and higher Being are far from us. But they are none the less helpful, and the more we try to realize the true power of God, to trust Him and be comforted by the thoughts of a great Spirit working in this world, the better we shall enjoy life, and the

stronger we shall feel in conquering difficulties and enduring sorrows and hardships.]

If I have any pictures or relics that would illustrate the lesson, I usually note it down at the end, so that the children may go away with a more vivid and actual idea of the lesson.

[*Example.* In the lesson on Joan of Arc I should show the class the pictures in Mark Twain's book on Joan of Arc, and the photographs I have of the statues of Joan in Orleans, Rheims, etc.]

LESSON: Acts i. and ii.

[Notes for the first lesson on the Acts of the Apostles, to be given to a class of girls average age $13\frac{1}{2}$, with some of the leading questions.]

Aims of lesson. To explain the authorship and object of the book of the Acts of the Apostles, to give a summary of the contents of chapter i., and to read and explain chapter ii. To consider shortly—how Christ's work still acts among us and is helpful.]

Who were Christ's disciples? What other name are they sometimes known by? What was their work?

(We are going to read part of the Acts of the Apostles. St. Luke probably wrote the book.) What do you know of St. Luke? What does the gospel of St. Luke tell us?

(One of the apostles, St. Paul, was Luke's great friend, whom he accompanied on many of his journeys, so that Luke was able to know thoroughly about St. Paul and his fellow-workers. The apostles whom we are going to

read about were not only the eleven disciples of Christ, but included many other men who had been converted, and with the eleven were so inspired with the love and teachings of Christ that they determined to try and spread the work among the people of Jerusalem and of different lands and nations. It is the works and lives of these men that Luke recounts in the book, and so sketches for us how far and in what way the gospel was first spread throughout the world.)

(In chapter i., Luke addresses his friend Theophilus, the same man to whom he wrote his gospel. The narrative begins by telling us how after the death of Christ the eleven disciples met together, and very much touched with the spirit of Christ resolved to devote their lives to carry out and spread the great teachings of their master. They held a meeting where several persons were present and in this assembly chose a man named Matthias in place of Judas Iscariot.) Why was Judas Iscariot rejected among the twelve? (Matthias was chosen by lot, he had been a close companion to Jesus and an eye-witness to many of his actions.—So these twelve formed a body of 'elder apostles' as they are called, and there were many others who devoted their lives to the same object, having been converted by Christ himself or his disciples.)

(Turn to Bibles and let one of the children read chapter ii. 1-4.) To whom does 'they' in verse 1 refer? At what feast were the apostles and

their friends? (Pentecost = fiftieth, the fiftieth day after the Passover, which would correspond to our Whitsuntide.) What happened at this feast? (At this feast, where the disciples and many other believers in Christ's teaching were present, we can imagine a storm arising, with thunder, lightning, wind and rain—so that we are told that 'tongues as of fire sat upon each of them.' In their anxiety and fear the people thought of the Great Creator and felt themselves inspired with the Holy Spirit, so that they began to speak with one another, and with gestures and utterances they all felt a common understanding of the greatness of Christ's works. Those who were not Jews, but had come to Jerusalem for trading purposes from foreign lands and had felt the truth of Christ's teachings, were inspired with the same spirit and resolved to join the band of Christ's apostles and speak to their own people.)

(Let one of the children read vv. 5-8.)

What do these verses tell us? Tell me a town you know where many languages are spoken?

(Just as in London, Constantinople, Peking, etc., there are people of all nations speaking different languages, so there were in Jerusalem. Verses 9-11 tell us several of the different peoples—men of Asia, Rome, Crete, Arabia, etc.)

(Let one of the children read vv. 12 and 13.)

What did all the people think of this strange occurrence?

Which of the disciples denied knowing Christ? Can you tell me anything that has struck you about the character of Peter?

(Tell the children the import of verses 14-36. Peter, when he heard the people mocking, stood up and addressed them in a long speech.—He reminded them how, long years before, the prophet Joel had spoken of a time when all men and women would better understand and revere God as a Father, and how, by having faith and hope in the Creator, life would be made stronger and people be happier.—Then Peter continued to say how Jesus, whom the Jews had ill-treated and crucified, had laid down his life for the love of God and his fellow-beings, and had shown them how best to gain strength and come nearer to God.—Again Peter reminded the people of the joy and strength their king David had through his trust in God.—Peter ended his speech by saying that Jesus was inspired with the Spirit of God, and Jesus should be their leader in this new religion that they wished to establish.)

(Let one of the children read vv. 37-42.)

How did the people feel after what Peter had said?

What was the result of Peter's address and appeal?

(Let one of the children read vv. 43-47.)

In what way did the people who were converted change their lives? Where did they worship? How did

this new spirit affect their feelings towards themselves and God?

What is the main purpose of this chapter? (The chapter tells us that many people of all nationalities in Jerusalem were converted through the efforts of the apostles, and that they lived together in a community worshipping God in the fulness and gladness of their hearts.)

(Associate the similar work that is still going on among ourselves, among Africans, Indians, Chinese, in fact, throughout the whole world. The people of the East have their gods and idols of brass and wood whom they worship, as well as the sun, moon, stars and rivers. But what a different effect it has on their lives! Sometimes it means cruelty to their fellow-creatures or to themselves. They become despondent and have no better aim in life than a mere hand-to-mouth existence. We acknowledge that there is good in their religion, but nowhere do we find the spiritual love of the Father, and the faith and hope in this life as well as that beyond—that Christian religion which strengthens life, making it joyous and happy.)

Who was the great teacher and master of this religion? (This religion has been handed down to us through generations, till we have received it from our fathers and mothers and teachers, and we have read about it especially in the Bible, and we can prove it from what goes on around us. So let us try and keep this faith and use it well at all times.) * * * * *

Boys' Class. Ages 13 to 15.

'How I prepare'—truly a large question to put to a teacher whose efforts that way have been very various in the course of twenty years' experience with scholars of varying age and culture. One thing I have learnt, *i.e.*, that there are two distinct kinds of preparation needful for a Sunday-school class—the one to prepare the lesson, and the other to prepare oneself as to the capacity and needs of the scholar; for often the words we use, or the Bible words, bear quite another meaning to them. Thus after reading the passage, 'Execute justice and mercy,' a lad of seventeen asked me solemnly, 'Why were justice and mercy to be hanged?' Others in the class said this had puzzled them too. Evidently to these readers of the 'Police News' the word *execute* simply meant *hang*!

Perhaps some of my experiences and failures may be the best means of throwing a little light on 'How I prepare?'

I had been teaching an older class of girls for a few years when I was asked to take a class of rather rough boys. Being fond of boys I agreed, and took great pains in the preparation of my first lesson, looking up anything that would explain or make the Gospel passage bright and interesting; then, provided with a map of Palestine, I set forth hopefully. There were some dozen lads from about thirteen to fifteen years of age. After the hymn

and prayer I asked one boy to hand round the Bibles. To my dismay the first boy took a Bible and promptly sat upon it with a defiant look; the next did the same; and though I kept my eyes steadily on my book, I was conscious that the whole class had disposed of their Bibles, and were laughing over the joke and making fun of their new teacher! Ignoring the Bibles altogether, I slowly unrolled the map and gazed at it till the boy next me looked to see what I had got; then I started off on geography, chiefly the physical features, pointing out here and there the place of some exciting battle scene, or the cave of a robber band, describing these till one after another the boys quieted down and listened. It was a relief when the bell rang, and I went away very much ashamed of myself, but determined that I must get to know the lads before attempting Gospel lessons, and also that I would not have a Bible in class again till I had taught them to appreciate it. I tried various experiments the next few Sundays with little success, till at last I 'struck oil' with the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' which was new to the boys. I bought a threepenny edition, which I did not mind spoiling, and used to strike out passages here and there to shorten it or avoid the more doctrinal parts. For each lesson I also used to mark on the margin some part that seemed applicable to their daily life, and have a few words of direct religious talk with them over that; for I found that, though only boys, they were meeting

the temptations and living the lives of men in the world. Having given the religious lesson from the 'Pilgrim's Progress' I used to tell them a story from the Bible, thus reversing the usual order. I chose stories chiefly from the prophets, with which the boys were not familiar, and used to read them up well beforehand so as to tell them in my own words, though sometimes I stopped at an interesting part, and when asked for more would promise to read them the rest from the Bible if they would bring me one! In this way they got so interested in one prophet that they actually asked me to give them his life straight through. So by the end of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' we went along happily with Bible lessons, each boy using his Bible to follow any passage I read. I did my best to put into each lesson enough geography and history to make it real and bright, but always tried to have a direct religious talk on some part. I found that a few earnest words brought in quite unconventionally were listened to where a regular lesson on religion would not have been.

Home-made maps I have found a great help. The scholars appreciate something you have made for them, however rough it be. I usually got a sheet of common paper, just thin enough to trace from an atlas, and indicate mountains, rivers, etc. A dash of blue paint over seas and lakes made it clearer. Then a few names of countries and the towns that will be needed. Half an hour will make one,

and such a map is less puzzling to the uneducated than one full of names. Besides, you can make it the size of your subject—thus, for lessons on the Babylonian Captivity you need a map reaching from Egypt to Persia, which you could not easily buy.

When giving lessons from 'Life in Palestine' and 'The Childhood of Jesus,' I made a rough skeleton map of Palestine for each boy, and left him to fill in the names of the towns as we came to them. They took great interest in this, and as they filled in the names at home it helped to impress the lesson on their minds. They did similar maps of Jerusalem, with the Kedron Valley and Mount of Olives.

In the 'Childhood of Jesus,' where references to the Bible are very frequent, I used to prepare beforehand a number of strips of paper with one reference written on each. These I dealt round the class before the lesson, and each boy looked up his own and put the paper in to mark the place, so that whenever I came to a reference in the lesson I had only to name it, and it was read by the holder without delay or interruption.

Models I found a great help, as they appeal to the eye—the shortest way to the mind. Once when in London I paid a visit to the Biblical Museum, 13, Serjeants' Inn, Fleet Street, E.C., where excellent models and objects for class teaching are on view as well as on sale. I bought there (for 1s., I think) an interesting little handbook called 'Models and Objects for Scrip-

ture Teaching,' by the Rev. J. G. Kitchen, M.A., Hon. Curator of the Church Sunday School Institute and Biblical Museum. This book contains pictures of Eastern customs and of the models, with full descriptions of their uses, with so much useful information bearing on the Bible that one can afford to pass over its chapter vii. on the Tabernacle and some other passages of rather antiquated scholarship. At this museum I also bought models of an Eastern house, with flat roof, verandah and court-yard (1s. 6d.); A Roll of the Law (6d.); Phylacteries for forehead and arm (the pair 3s. 6d.); a Mezuzah, or tin case, containing the parchment scroll affixed to the door-post (6d.); a Tassel or Fringe worn by Jews (4d.), etc. Once I asked a carpenter boy in my class if he would make me another model of the Eastern house to give to the superintendent at Christmas. He said he should like to make *me* one for a Christmas present, and I could give the original away. He made me a good one; also a locked box in which to keep our models, maps, Bibles, etc. And another member of the class, who was a painter, painted it and initialled it.

In giving a course of lessons from Crawford Toy's book, 'The History of the Religion of Israel' (1s.), I wanted to impress on the scholars' minds that the Bible was a collection of books on various subjects, and had grown up gradually. To this end I bought two Revised Bibles of equal size, and after taking off their backs, separated the

different books of the Old Testament, taking them alternately from either Bible, so that the beginnings and endings might be complete. A book-binder cut me as many card backs as I wanted in different colours, so that I was able to bind the Law books in red, the Prophets in blue, Poems in green, Historical books in yellow, and Stories in brown. They were only roughly done, with titles gummed on their backs; but they served their purpose, and it was convenient to be able to introduce one book at a time as the lessons came to it. At the end of the course I brought down all the books in no order whatever, and let the class arrange them in chronological order. The result was very satisfactory, showing that they had remembered the lessons well.

I often find it well to write the outline of a lesson on a large sheet of paper that can be pinned up, especially where many names occur, as the sight of these helps the memory, and it is as easy to have one's notes on the large sheet as on a small paper.

Having a very lively, restless class for many years compelled me to keep my eyes on them most of the time, so that even when using a class-book which seemed straightforward reading, I always felt obliged to read it well up beforehand, so as to be prepared for emergencies.

Now as to the other kind of preparation, I found great help from getting to know the boys individually, though it was not easy. Calling at the home

was the first step, for though the boy was out working, I learnt his surroundings and something about him. And I certainly found it easier to be patient with the irrepressible tease of the class when I found that after working hard all week, he always got up early on Sunday to light the fire and give the children their breakfast that his mother might lie in bed a little for a weekly rest. In another case I found that a lad, who often seemed heavy and stupid, never got to bed till between two and three o'clock on Sunday morning. He was shop assistant in a small third-rate shop which kept open till midnight on Saturdays, like all the shops in that neighbourhood. This was because 'turning out time' at the public-houses was not till eleven, and many women or children had to wait till then to get the remnant of a husband's or father's weekly wages, wherewith to go shopping. After closing the shop at midnight, my boy had to help his master to do the accounts, then sweep out the shop and tidy up, so that it was often one o'clock before he could start for home, a mile or two off. Then he had to have his supper and talk awhile, then clean his boots and himself! Besides, they said there was little chance of sleep there before that time owing to the shouts and brawls of drunken men and women in the street.

I found Saturday afternoon 'outs' very useful for those boys who could get off, but Bank Holidays were our jolliest days. Cheap fares could be had then to several good places. The boys saved

up for the fare, each took his own lunch, and I treated them to a tea. On such days I got to know them well, and was able to enjoy their fun and clever repartee. Whereas on Sundays, if they said anything bright, I had to do my best to look solemn, as our class had another touching it on the right, another on the left, and another close behind, so that a laugh would have made a great disturbance. After ten years in that room I was promoted to an older class and a class-room where we could talk naturally and laugh if we wanted to.

Sunday morning breakfast parties also proved successful for getting to know working boys. They were clean and tidy and free then. I only had two boys at a time. I invited one the previous Sunday, and let him choose his companion. After breakfast I walked down to Sunday school with them, when they chatted freely. This also gave them two miles' walk into fresher air than their homes, and another two miles to school afterwards.

I fear this is a rambling account of 'how I prepare,' but it may serve to show some of my efforts in that direction.

* * * * *

GOETHE said: 'Man sollte alle Tage wenigstens ein kleines Lied hören, ein gutes Gedicht lesen, ein treffliches Gemälde sehen.'—'every day we should hear at least one little song, read one good poem, and look at one choice picture.' Few of us have not the opportunity; songs and poems abound, and earth and sky will give pictures in plenty to eyes that look for them. Shall we starve our souls any longer?

Nature Sketches.

THESE two following 'Nature Sketches' may not strike all teachers who read them as being any help to them in preparing their lessons; but there must be many who, like myself, were taught in childhood's days that Nature was a constant revelation of God, and, therefore, a source of religious instruction to those who could learn its language. The children in our great centres of population are of necessity so far away from rustic sights and sounds that, unless their teachers take special pains to develop within them a passion for the wonders and beauties of the country, they are apt to grow up woefully ignorant of the world in which they live. Because I have found an intimate acquaintance with Nature very helpful in my own religious work among the young, I contribute these sketches, at the Editor's request, to the present volume.

Early Summer Thoughts.

•WALKING along the dusty highway the other day, I saw some merry school boys climbing up a fence to pluck some bursting May buds; and the younger scholars loitered on their way home to weave daisy-chains, and to fill their laps with dog-violets and dandelions. Memory at once held me cap-

tive. I leaned upon the old stone bridge, beneath which the clear water murmured over the stones, and on its rippling surface the shadows danced. The stream became to my imagination a magic mirror, in which I saw back through three or four decades when I was a little boy, and loved to nestle in the lap of dame Nature. I am by no means averse to talking to that little fellow, and looking into his eyes sparkling with delight, and listening to his merry roguish laughter; but he soon rushes away with cap in hand to chase the gorgeous butterfly, or to search the fence for birds' nests. Sometimes he is wandering at early morn through the fields, hand in hand with his father, listening to the lark, and straining his eye to trace its lofty flight; or in the green lanes at eventide, when the sun sinks fiery red in the west, and the nightingale warbles more sweetly as the shadows deepen, and the goat-sucker shrieks weirdly in the fir wood. Sometimes I see him trudging towards the heath to fly his kite heavenwards, and to lie upon the blossoming ling, entranced by the music of uncountable birds and the rustling of the wind through gorse and grass; and peopling the clear blue of heaven with the dreams of his childish fancy.

I confess that I feel all the stronger and more trustful a man for the love that was awakened within me for the beautiful things in Nature, in those old days now so long gone by. Many times have I stood bare-headed 'neath the glorious blue of heaven, and, with

a joy the intensity of which no one save myself can adequately measure, unless he has had a similar past experience, I have blessed the memory of those now lying at rest in their graves, who, with an interest that charmed, led me gently amidst the delights of Nature, and taught me to love the God who made them. Parents who are anxious to discharge their obligations to their children, and equip them thoroughly for useful and sympathetic manhood, can do nothing more lasting in its influence than lead their little ones by the hand through flowery meads, where streams meander, where the trees shoot up their frondent heads majestically, and the birds warble as if the world contained nought save love and joy. A hopeful temperament that finds calm and rest in the contemplation of natural beauty is worth more than all the gold of Klondyke; for, unless in a man's soul there is peace and confidence in Divine ordinance, his possessions are of little worth.

Away from the busy streets, where the scent of the May came like a long-buried memory, where the daisies and celandines star-bespangled the sunny slopes and the shady dells, I meditated upon the approach of summer, and sucked in through every pore the golden sunlight. I saw the big sheaths of chestnut and sycamore cracking and unfolding, and the delicate green leaves appearing. The cherry and pear trees were white with blossom, while the apple tree lent variety with its pink-hued clusters. What a tremendous

energy was at work thus changing the aspect of Nature! Up through the hard ground the corn shot its tender blade; wherever I looked, there was a manifestation of power. A silent, resistless force was at work, reviving all things, effacing with its beauty the bareness of winter, and indicating an infinite reserve of invisible energy behind. Amidst this wondrous power and glory, I listened to the feathered orchestra around and above me, discoursing joyous music. The larks, like specks in the azure, warbled their treble at the gates of light; the black-birds on the topmost boughs piped in a minor key; the thrushes trilled roulades that a Jenny Lind might envy; and the great army of finches swelled with their twittering the incessant chorus of song. They could not help it. Instinct compels them on the return of sunshine to pour out their hearts in song; they are so full of joy and love, that they cannot resist; and unconsciously they raise a hymn of sweetest praise to the Giver of all good,—the Spirit in whom they live and move and have their being.

‘Shall man, alone, unthankful, his little praise deny?’

Music is the spirit's voice, and it can express deeper emotions than words can. Let us herald in the glorious summer-time with song, and vie with Nature in intensity and heartiness. There is music in the patter of raindrops upon the foliage of the trees; there is music in the hum

of bees and in the rippling of the brook.

Now, what is the deep, true meaning of all this excitement and song in Nature? The birds and trees and flowers, though they cannot think, humanly, fulfil their appointed duty. Everything in this universe has a purpose to serve, and is essential to Nature's perfect economy. And are not we more than the beasts and birds and flowers? We, who can think? We, who can do or leave undone, as it may please us? Who can guess at the meaning of God's will, and are self-conscious, and within whom, as it were, a God sits in judgment between right and wrong? Why are we here? Are men and women brothers and sisters? Are suffering and vice and poverty to continue? Can we benefit the world morally and materially? Can we give any succour? Convey the strength of religious faith to the doubting? Break asunder the fetters of superstition and ignorance which bind men's minds? Give men's souls wings on which to fly heavenwards? Goad them to aspire towards higher ideals of truth and love and goodness?

Yes, we can! and as far as our influence extends, we are bound to attempt these things in the name of God! Let us sing with the birds, and smile with the flowers, and revel in the golden glory of summer-time; but let us remember that the world demands our greatest strength, our sincerest effort; and that unless we discharge our obligations with grim earnestness,

as real men and women, we are unworthy of those blessings of life which God in His providence is continually pouring down upon us.

A Country Chat.

I AM spending a little holiday at a well-known health resort in Yorkshire, and find myself one amongst many others who pull wry faces over their tumblers in the pump-room every morning. Here and there is a happy (?) mortal without a palate, or with sense of taste sufficiently blunted to enable him to walk up to the counter jocularly and ask for 'a glass of hot and strong,' and then drink it down as if it were nectar. Said a man to me one morning, with a knowing wink, 'You know, I think the outdoor exercise before breakfast every morning does one more good than the vile beverage the doctor orders one to drink.' Anyhow, people come here to get tone and health and strength, and most of them leave feeling much better than when they came; and no doubt the waters and air and exercise can all claim a share in the result attained. Nor should scenery be omitted from that list of influences which secure so beneficial an effect upon those who come here for health. The town itself is situated as it were in a park. Turf and trees are everywhere. Probably no other town in England has so much unenclosed common land, sacred for ever from the builder's clutch; while

the country all round is as varied as one could wish it to be. It seemed a long time since I had the chance of wandering amidst country scenes at this period of the year. So I am taking in a good fill of all the beauty characteristic of the country in the 'Merry month of May.' More than a week ago I strolled through the fields in the quiet eventide, listening to the corncrakes in the hayfields and the doves in the woods, while in addition to these there seemed to be a songster warbling in every bush and tree. Such sounds carry me back to the old days with all their sweet and tender memories, and I welcome them as things of priceless value. Why, even that querulous hen cackling down there in a cottager's garden carries me back in imagination to the days when I was a tiny little chap, besmirched all over with tar, and proudly helping paterfamilias to inaugurate a trial in poultry-keeping. I think I can hear the uproar that first black hen made when she laid an egg in the hamper while waiting for us to complete the building for her habitation; and I remember how she disappointed us by never laying another. The birds that most abound in this neighbourhood are the blackbird and hedge-sparrow; the rich mellow notes of the former are heard loud above all other rustic sounds throughout the day, while the latter trills its short sweet ditty with persistent reiteration of every crick and turn. Next comes the thrush, with its rich connected song so joyous

and exultant. I have lifted up my little daughter so that she might peep for the first time into a thrush's nest to see its pretty speckled eggs; and it seems but as yesterday when my father did the same kind service for me. Then we trespass just a wee bit into the grass, and gather a big bunch of mayflowers and buttercups, together with a few despised but beautiful dandelions.

The other day I witnessed a very sad tragedy of bird life. While passing over the moor I saw a huge crowd of boys following a fire-engine back to town. The dry heather and furze had been set on fire by the careless throwing away of a lighted match, and the devastating blaze had not been extinguished before a considerable portion of the moor was charred and blackened to extreme ugliness. Schoolboys on mischief bent had roamed with keen eyes over that wild expanse in search of birds' nests; but one at least had defied detection, for there, in the top of a tall growth of furze through which the devouring fire had swept, were the ruins of a thrush's nest. A crowd of urchins gathered round when their attention was drawn to it, and I think they must have learnt a lesson which they will never forget. The mother thrush sat on her nest, which she had helped so skilfully to plan and build, dead; her once beautiful feathers all cruelly singed; while under her breast her four helpless little bairns were also burnt to death. What love! What devotion! And yet some people

seem to think that the birds cannot teach us anything. It would have been easy for the mother thrush to find safety for herself on her strong wings; but, no, she couldn't abandon her offspring,—she would either effectually shield them or perish with them.

Not very far from the moor is the crag—a picturesque confusion of piled-up sandstone rocks. Between these and the high land beyond is a deep glen, charmingly wooded with alders and stunted oaks, and a great many wild apple trees full of sweetly-tinted blossoms. At the bottom of the glen is a shallow rock-strewn stream, making music as it tumbles along, and looking very pretty as viewed from the rocks through the green foliage. You can scramble down the slope through the brown bracken and dog violets, and when you reach the stream you can leap from boulder to boulder, and wander amongst the denser growth of vegetation on the other side, making yourself believe that you are a hundred miles from anywhere. How weird are the sounds in such a solitude. The bees hum amongst the crab-apple blossoms, and the song of the lark drops down into those shady depths like liquid sweetness. There are other human beings wandering in the wood, and their merry laughter reminds one of Cowper's lines:—

But give me still a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper 'Solitude is
sweet.'

The crags to which I have referred are of a very useful and easily worked

sandstone, which becomes tremendously hard when exposed to the air; and a great deal of it has been used for building purposes in the adjacent township. Entering the glen by the level road one afternoon, I passed through the quarry, and stopped a while to watch the men fashioning building sets out of the rough, unwieldy rock. I entered into conversation with one of them, and gleaned a good bit of interesting information about his craft and his hours and his pay. The face of the crag showed how at some remote period it had been upheaved and torn by the mighty forces of Nature. I suggested to the quarryman that such a sight was awesome, and that Nature had some terrible dynamite bottled up somewhere; fully expecting that even a rustic would show some appreciation of the fact. Instead of doing so, however, he looked at me pityingly as if I were a heathen, and with an air of superiority said, 'Have ye ever read o' the Flood in the Bible? Tha's when all this sort o' thing was done. The waters covered the whole earth, an' things were turned topsy-turvy.' And then my instructor was silent. I endeavoured to wheedle out of him some further details of his theory; but he remained as dumb as the sphinx. The Flood! Who would think of seeking further information than that gives, except he be heathen or infidel or a doubter of the self-sufficiency of holy writ? And so I ignominiously beat a retreat down a

zig-zag path amongst the brown bracken, until I came to a damp nook teeming with dog violets and anemones and primroses; and then I wondered whether that rustic, the ringing of whose chisel and hammer I could still hear, ever went into raptures over the beautiful colours, the ravishing perfumes, and the entrancing songs in which that idyllic spot abounded? How far is it Peter Simple's own fault that he can find nothing specially attractive, nothing to worship, nothing to fall down on his knees and thank God for, in the wondrous sights and sounds by which he is surrounded, and in which he might increasingly and rapturously revel?

CHARLES ROPER.

ANOTHER DAY.

O God! I thank Thee for each sight
Of beauty that Thy hand doth give,—
For sunny skies and air and light;
O God! I thank Thee that I live.

That life I consecrate to Thee;
And ever as the day is born,
On wings of joy my soul would flee,
To thank Thee for another morn.

Another day in which to cast
Some silent deed of love abroad,
That, greatening as it journeys past,
May do some earnest work for God.

Another day to do, to dare:
To tax anew my growing strength;
To arm my soul with faith and prayer,
And so reach heaven and Thee at length.
MRS. C. A. MASON.

Jesus at Jacob's Well.

BY THE REV. FRANK WALTERS.

John iv. 1-24.



WE generally form pictures in our minds of Jesus as the *preacher*, controlling the multitudes, by the magic of his words,—of Jesus as the *healer*, surrounded by the sick, who stretch out their hands to receive his saving touch,—of Jesus as the *master*, giving commands to his disciples and settling their foolish quarrels by his law of love. But, in the Gospels there are also touching scenes in which we find him face to face with some individual man or woman, flashing the light of truth into a darkened mind, scattering the shades of sin by the vision of holiness, and giving a new direction to the wavering will by some inflexible principle of eternal righteousness. To Nicodemus, with his superficial reliance on signs and wonders, he declares the necessity of the spiritual new birth; to the rich young man he points the way to the perfect life by the exercise of self-sacrifice; and to this peasant woman by Jacob's well he reveals the purest worship of the divine Father in spirit and in truth. Let us try to realise the contact of the Son of God with this obscure daughter of a despised race, and learn how ideal goodness can meet the needs of a stained and darkened soul.

I.

Jesus left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria.

The way from Judea to Galilee lay directly through the country of the Samaritans, a people who were regarded by the Jews as outcasts and aliens. The historians tell us that this route was, in general, avoided by Jewish pilgrims, who preferred to travel a long way round rather than expose themselves to the insults of their enemies, or be compelled to ask food and drink from their unclean hands. But Jesus, with his broad humanism, was influenced neither by these scruples nor by these fears. To him, even these heretics were *men*, brethren in the great family of God. To him, human nature was so sacred, that there was nothing common and unclean.

Beneath his broad, impartial eye,
How fade the lines of caste and birth !
How equal in their sufferings lie
The groaning multitudes of earth !

That was the intense humanity of Jesus ; even those despised Samaritans were his brethren, all alike children of one Father. And we also notice that Jesus was absolutely *fearless*. The great soul is always indifferent to physical dangers and individual perils. 'To be always safe is to be always feeble.' Life is made not for safety, but for service. There was nothing those alien people could do which gave one moment's apprehension to that godlike soul. This piece of work had

got to be done ; and, at all costs, it must be accomplished with an undaunted courage. Jesus must go from Judea to Galilee, and he went by the nearest way, even though it lay through Samaria.

II.

Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well : and it was about the sixth hour.

There is a fine poetic significance in that scene where the wearied Jew, in the midst of the land of defilement, finds rest by Jacob's well. For the sight of that ancient well instantly called up memories of those far-off patriarchal days, before the children of Abraham had been separated by miserable quarrels and partizan differences.

This is how, later on in the narrative, even the alien woman speaks with tender, historical interest of the place :—'Our father Jacob gave us the well, and drank thereof, himself, and his children, and his cattle.' 'Our Father Jacob,'—the thought of a common ancestry made her, unconsciously, overlook for the moment, the paltry distinctions of race and creed.

'Our Father Jacob,'—progenitor alike of orthodox Jew and heretical Samaritan,—that was the sentiment which overtopped all later divisions

of form and worship. The patriarch had bestowed this gift of water to all his children, long before there was any anticipation of these theological disputes and ecclesiastical quarrels. Before there was any shrine on mount Gerizim or any temple at Jerusalem, around that well the chosen people used to gather in one undivided worship and one unbroken psalm of praise. 'One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.' The memories of the old home, where once the complete household was consecrated by mutual love and parental care, often have a wonderful influence in softening animosities and healing wounds.

'Our Father Jacob,'—and here is the very well where he drank, himself, and his children, and his cattle! When two brothers, who separated in anger, come back from the ends of earth, and stand by the old hearth, drink together once more from the well of their childish days, and visit the grave where their parents lie at rest,—then all the squalid disputes of intervening years are forgotten, swept by a flood of hallowed memories,—then the anger fades from their eyes, every cloud of wrath vanishes from their faces; and, for the sake of auld lang syne, they clasp hands, their hearts blended into purest love. The parcel of ground that Jacob gave, the well that Jacob dug,—these events of ancient time still had their influence. How one deed of simple goodness becomes immortal, and propagates its influence

through all succeeding years! You can never get to the end of a single act of goodness. It is said that a cup of cold water given to thirsty lips is a sacrament of divine grace. And, so, the pure cold water of this well had gone on flowing, through all those ages, a symbol of that essential human mercy, which transcends the ritual of priestcraft and survives the divisions of sectarianism. When Jacob dug that well, it was impossible for him to foresee that on its stones the greatest son of all his race would sit and teach the Fatherhood of God to one of his obscure, stained, alien daughters, who came wandering thither from the ancient village which stood hard by. To us, to-day, that shrine at Gerizim is only a name, the temple at Jerusalem is but a memory; yet the thought of Jacob's well instantly quickens in our minds a sacred scene, and inspires our souls with an ever deepening reverence for the divine Father, who is always seeking his children, the God who is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. I am told that, to-day, the stone-work of that well is in ruins, that its spring of water is choked with dust; and yet, if I went to Palestine, I am sure that that scene of desolation would be more sacred to me than all the gorgeous places at Jerusalem and Bethlehem, which priests have adorned with their ritual. There Jesus sat and spoke of the divine Father and the spiritual worship.

III.

Let us ponder the exquisite significance of that scene, which rises so vividly before us, through all those vistas of the past.

There cometh a Samaritan woman to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

This is one of those meetings which seem so accidental, and yet on which so much of destiny depends. 'God hangs the heaviest weights on the slenderest wires.' The great world of Roman power and Greek wisdom, and Oriental splendour was sweeping on around; while, in that silent spot, a conversation was taking place, some of whose words were to shake humanity and re-create religion. They are face to face!—the great Son of God and the superstitious, sinful woman. And, in a moment, by one of those swift touches of purest human impulse, Jesus abrogates the difference between heterodox and orthodox, between sinner and saint; they are both one,—one in the man's thirst and the woman's power to minister to his need. 'Jesus saith unto her, "Give me to drink."' What, to his disciples, would have been pollution, to Jesus was a pure deed of mercy; even from that woman's hands the water from Father Jacob's well was a pledge of fellowship. I do not agree with those who think that the woman was so cruel, in her animosity, as to deny the prayer of the thirsty traveller. Instantly, I believe,

she responded to that wearied cry, touched by those pleading eyes and parched lips. In a moment of womanly tenderness, the vessel was lowered into the well, and the cool water was quenching the terrible thirst of the exhausted man. But, as she gave him the draught, she could not help wondering at the unwonted sympathy that could take the gift from her polluted touch. Scarcely conscious of what she said, speaking, I fancy, chiefly to herself, to relieve her feeling of amazement, she let her traditional bigotry express itself in words.

Then said the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?

What an example is that speech of the provincialism and intolerance which so often spoils our best deeds and stains our finest sympathies! The woman's mind was so full of theological prejudice and national exclusiveness, that she could not even give a cup of cold water to a thirsty man without remarking that he did not belong to the same church as herself. There, in one single touch, we learn how bigotry dehumanises, and how suffering humanises. This woman's prejudice makes her wonder how it is possible for an orthodox Jew to accept from her the simplest service; while, at the same time, her swift emotion of pity flies to supply his need. After all, humanity is the one supreme fact that cannot be eliminated or overlooked; the

essential human nature will affirm itself, in spite of bounds and barriers, sects and creeds. Every now and then, in supreme crises and instant emergencies, the flood-gates of the great deep are broken up, and a swelling impulse of universal charity overwhelms our narrow theories and partial schemes in one great tidal wave of divine mercy. The woman is saying to herself, 'This man is a Jew, and I am a Samaritan;' and all the time she is giving the life-giving draught to his thirsty lips.

IV.

Jesus has drunk the water; and then he feels an intense longing to do something for her who has ministered to his need. 'Ah!' he thinks, 'if I could only satisfy this woman's soul as readily as she has satisfied my thirst, into what a larger and diviner life would she, at once, be able to rise.' As she murmurs her little bit of inevitable bigotry about 'Jew' and 'Samaritan' he looks at her, and cries, in words which sound, to her unaccustomed ear, quite strange and foreign:

If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink: thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

'If thou knewest,'—never would one thought of orthodoxy and heresy have entered thy mind; all such ignoble considerations would have

been forgotten in seeking the divine gift from the son of God. 'If thou knewest,'—but that is the tragedy, we do not know! How little we guess the supreme blessings close at hand, to be granted to one word of prayer! How we fill our minds with earthly things at the very time when heavenly treasure lies waiting at our door. We little suspect the Divine Presences that are nearest to us, veiled in some weak form of flesh; some obscure man, or tired woman, or simple-hearted child may possess the very secret we are longing all our lives to reach! God's most gracious angels do not come to us in golden crowns, and bright wings, and glistening raiment; they sit by our sides and we know them not; they sojourn in our homes and we discern them not; we eat and drink with them, and we do not realise that the breaking of bread becomes a sacrament. Alas! we know not the gift of God; and so we fail to speak the prayer that would bring to our thirsty souls the draught of living water. This woman knew not, she was lost in ignorance, she completely misunderstood the words of Jesus. 'The gift of God,' the gift of 'living water,' to be bestowed by a poor wanderer who himself was parched with thirst,—it all sounded to her like so much jugglery; her bewildered mind could catch no meaning in these perplexing words. Hence, when he promises living water, in her simple ignorance she cries:—

Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

V.

Nothing can be more touching than the patience with which Jesus tries to make his hearer feel that there is a deeper meaning in his words. This is how he endeavours to express the difference between the needs of the body and of the soul:—

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again?

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

To us, those words tremble under the spiritual truth that inspires them; the entire gospel of personal faith is there enunciated in antagonism to the artificial schemes, whereby divine grace is supposed to be imparted to the soul by acceptance of dogmas and performance of ceremonies. Those words abolish, at a stroke, all the traditionalisms and ritualisms by which men have tried to find the way to heaven. The opinions of the past can never quench the thirst of the soul to-day. Religion is not something imposed upon us from without, it is a source of divine energy within,

springing up into everlasting life. What a lesson is that,—that here, within our own human nature, is oracle and shrine, altar and temple. But such a doctrine was quite beyond the comprehension of the listener.

So thoroughly materialistic is this woman's notion of religion, that she still imagines that this is a juggler, a mystery man, who can help to relieve her of some of the cares of her weary life. 'It is tiresome,' she thinks to herself, 'to have to trudge, night and morning, with my water-pot to the distant well; if I can learn this clever trick of always having fresh water near at hand, it will be a vast convenience and a domestic luxury.' And we must not too much blame this poor woman; she had a laborious life; physical necessities pressed very hardly upon her. Do not we, sometimes, in hours of worship become haunted by thoughts of business cares and domestic worries. Often, as you try to listen to the sermon, you cannot get rid of anxious thoughts as to how the dinner is being cooked, how the baby is being attended to, or how that troublesome bill is going to be discharged to-morrow. No wonder, then, that this ignorant peasant woman could not understand Christ's doctrine, and only thought about her daily labour. That would be grand,—to be relieved of the task of trudging up the hill with her supply of water!

The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

VI.

Jesus now perceives that it is all in vain to speak of the higher spiritual life; every sublime doctrine instantly drops into a lower plane of experience; every word that palpitates with pure religious feeling is at once precipitated into materialistic terms. There is no use preaching transcendental religion; there must be a direct appeal to life, to conscience, to character and conduct. Instead of expounding celestial truth, the teacher must begin with the merest alphabet of moral law. It is clear that Jesus hesitates to touch the ugly spot in her life; but he must be cruel to be kind; if she is to be saved from her baser self that dark stain must be exposed and cleansed. We need not linger on the way in which this great Master sends his appeal right home to the dark secrets of a fallen soul. He does it with a tenderness ineffable. Yet it is clear that his hearer shrinks instinctively from his words. This way of dealing with religion is *too personal*; this method of teaching is *too practical*. And, with the quick adroitness of her sex, she parries the blow, and tries to turn the conversation into a less painful channel. Jesus wants to speak about matters of conduct. 'No,' she says, 'let us talk instead about theology. Look at these two churches, the one at Jerusalem, the other on Mount Gerizim; now, which is the true one? Which can claim the genuine divine warrant? Which holds the power to impart the grace of heaven to the soul?'

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

The suggestion was intended to parry the appeal to character; and yet we must everlastingly render our thanks to the woman for that inquiry,—an inquiry which drew from the Master the noblest words of recorded scripture,—words containing the affirmation of God's Fatherhood and Spiritual Worship, which must be the watchword of pure and undefiled religion while the world endures.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

When Renan quotes that immortal utterance, his incomparable style flashes into an unwonted glow, his pen catches the fire of inspiration:—'The day on which he uttered this saying, he was truly the Son of God. He pronounced for the first time the sentence upon which will repose the edifice of eternal religion. He founded the pure worship of all ages, of all lands, that which all elevated souls will practise until the end of time. Not only was his religion on this day the best religion of humanity, it was the absolute religion; and if other

planets have inhabitants gifted with reason and morality, their religion cannot be different from that which Jesus proclaimed near the well of Jacob. Man has not been able to maintain this position, for the ideal is realised but transitorily. This sentence of Jesus has been a brilliant light amidst gross darkness; it has required eighteen hundred years for the eyes of mankind (what do I say! for an infinitely small number of mankind) to become accustomed to it. But the light will become the full day, and, after having run through all the cycles of error, mankind will return to this sentence, as the immortal expression of its faith and its hope.'

O FAIREST-BORN of Love and Light,
Yet bending brow and eye severe
On all which pains the holy sight,
Or wounds the pure and perfect ear!

Beneath thy broad, impartial eye,
How fade the lines of caste and birth!
How equal in their sufferings lie
The groaning multitudes of earth!

Still to a stricken brother true,
Whatever clime hath nurtured him;
As stooped to heal the wounded Jew
The worshipper of Gerizim.

In holy words which cannot die,
In thoughts which angels leaned to know,
Christ spake thy mercy, O Most High,
Thy pity to each grievous woe.

That voice's echo hath not died;
From the blue lake of Galilee,
From Tabor's lonely mountain-side,
It calls a struggling world to thee.

How to Teach.



HAVE been asked by the Editor to contribute a paper on 'How to Teach'; but apart from the fact that I have been teaching continuously for twenty-five years, and during the last six years every day in the week, I do not seem to myself to possess any remarkable qualifications for the task. The first occasion on which I taught at all was when an uncle, who was the superintendent of the Church of the Messiah Schools in Birmingham, called me one Sunday from a very interesting lesson by Mr. Arthur Chamberlain, put me in a chair in front of about twenty boys very little younger than myself, gave me a text-book, and bade me teach them. I suspect that a very large percentage of those teachers who read these lines in search of guidance, which they will probably not find in them, will confess to having received just as little actual preparation for the work they are engaged in. Most of us were flung upon our responsible duties without any very clear ideas as to what we were expected to do or how we were to set about it.

Now, one of the most prominent features of our Sunday-school work is the fact that, while so many enter upon it, so few, comparatively, are faithful to it through any length of years. There are incidental reasons for this, of course; but there can be no doubt

that many forsake it because they are conscious of their inability to secure success in it. And I do not think there is any greater proportion of failures than there would be in any profession or any business that was approached in the like manner. There is an ancient jest about a man who was asked whether he could play the violin, and replied that he did not know, he had never tried. Some of us are painfully aware that we never could master it, an imperfect ear, or unskilful and insensitive fingers, presenting insuperable barriers to our success. But, on the other hand, there are undoubtedly many, now unskilled, who might become very acceptable performers upon it were the instrument itself forthcoming and the necessary time at our disposal. So that the subject of this old jest answered quite rightly after all. And concerning the matter before us, it must be said at the outset that none can say whether he can teach or not until he has tried it, until he has given it the same amount of trial which he would give to any other pursuit which he wishes to follow.

Training is, no doubt, an excellent thing, in this as in everything else; and training can ensure an amount of confidence which would help some to success who would otherwise fail. But while it may furnish method, and even do somewhat to supply material, the very best training is apt to fail before some situations we teachers have to face, and material is sometimes prone

to prove indigestible when presented to other minds unless the right kind of sauce accompany it. It may, further, defeat the very end it aims at.

We have heard a well-known college, for the training of ministers, accused of producing the best scholars and the worst preachers and pastors in the country. In every athletic sport great care has to be exercised against growing 'stale' through over-training. There is just the same danger lest the teacher should become merely a scholar, and while knowing much himself be able to present almost nothing to his class. One of the most successful teachers of the pianoforte was never known to play the instrument herself, and I have heard her pupils wondering among themselves as to whether she could do so. Indeed, one is often tempted to dismiss the whole question of teaching as a natural gift, and therefore inexplicable; capable of being strengthened and helped by training, but incapable of being implanted thereby; and to say that we are for ever condemned to a series of experiments by which the real teachers shall be eliminated from those who simply do their best to keep a class quiet and mark time. But then, to give one pause, there is the recollection of repeated, and not always successful, efforts to secure the services of young men and maidens for this Sunday-school work, and the reflection that this work of ours is not quite the same as the work of the day-school, as well

as the thought of the necessity that may be laid upon one to obtain these helpers in the future.

But in spite of all I have said, and in furtherance of the objects of the promoters of our teachers' summer schools, I should like to say that training of some kind is an essential to every kind of teaching that is to accomplish good results. For several years I have had a small day-school of some twenty boys, which has taught me much. And especially has it taught me this: that in the absence of this special training for the teaching office, the process becomes a more or less lengthy series of experiments—experiments which are conducted at the expense of the scholars. For in order to teach anything at all it is necessary that the teacher shall not only know the subject well, and know it in all its bearings, but that he shall also know beforehand how much of it he intends to teach, and in what order the several parts shall be presented. In my old college days it was expected of certain students in turn that they would bring to the professor what were called 'schemes' of sermons upon a text placed in their hands. Now, every minister knows that there is a vast difference between writing a sermon upon a text that finds him and one that is found for him. And every writer is aware that although he may never put it down upon paper, some 'scheme' or skeleton of what he wishes to say presents itself to his mind; and training in the art of

framing 'skeletons' is a very important beginning in the art of writing. Such is also the case in drawing from the life—artistic anatomy is one of its recognised preliminaries. All this implies training, and that of a very definite character. And in its relation to teaching, it means training in the art of putting things in their best form, so as to know at the outset the goal we would reach, and the steps by which we propose to reach it. I remember that when I first had a class of my own, in a mission school at Birmingham, I found the 'Teachers' Notes' which preceded this series of 'Helpers' a most valuable aid; but I never felt myself prepared until I had reduced to notes which could be put on one sheet of paper, and arranged in a kind of rough perspective of their relative values, the contents of several pages of the printed book. I have sometimes spent a whole evening over this preparation of the skeleton of a lesson which was to occupy less than an hour in delivery, and found that the more work I put into it the less compass did my notes fall into and the more successful was my lesson. Subsequent experience has amply justified the method, until I have come to regard it as one of the very best plans that any teacher can adopt. It is wonderful how this work grows upon one, how many thoughts come crowding in, to be rejected, or adopted, or deferred till another occasion; and how greatly it clears up, expands, and strengthens one's own knowledge of the matter in

hand, compelling him to consult all manner of authorities, and bringing out in a manner which is sometimes startling the central idea of the whole, which is very often far other than he thought it when he began.

All this, of course, deals with the actual teaching, and every lesson ought to advance the subject in some measure. Where a text-book is used, it is a much discussed point as to whether any preparation we may ask from the scholars—I am now referring more especially to the elder scholars—should be by way of retrospect or prospect, whether they should be asked to go back again over the matter of the lesson given or break ground for the next. Personally, I prefer the latter plan, both on account of the greater interest excited, and also because it enables the teacher to put aside the text-book, seize its central ideas, and present them in any form or order that may best commend itself to his judgment. One of the best teachers I ever had always told us within the first two minutes the conclusion he proposed to reach, and having stated that, went right back to the beginning and worked up to it. The preparation of the lesson beforehand will also open the way for question and discussion, which may be difficult to begin with a class, but is never very difficult to continue when once it has been started. And a chapter from the Bible will prove as good a topic as any other if only it has been announced beforehand and prepared by both teacher and class. I lay the utmost stress upon this feature

of our work. No master of a day-school would venture to go before his pupils to teach them even a chapter in history, or a rule of arithmetic, without looking it up beforehand; for however well he may know it, he is aware that new aspects of the matter constantly present themselves, new meanings and new values arise, and new methods of meeting possible difficulties in the minds of those he would teach. And in work like that of the Sunday-school the personal equation of each scholar has still more to be reckoned with, so that a lesson which was delivered with even marked success to one batch of hearers may utterly fail of point and application when offered to another.

This brings me to some consideration of the necessary requirements in the teacher himself. And the first of these is love for the work. The exigencies of the situation make us grateful for the services of many who lack this, but there are not a few who begin with feeling that it is difficult, unattractive, even positively hateful, who nevertheless soon come to regard it in a very different spirit. Now there can be only one reason for this, and that is to be found in the growth of sympathy. An unsympathetic teacher can never be a successful one. In a series of stories which 'Ian Maclaren' is writing for the *Windsor Magazine* there is portrayed the character of a Scotch teacher of mathematics who was known to his pupils as 'Bulldog,' and the most obvious sign of whose method was his affection for the 'tawse.' Now to whip

a boy is not generally regarded as the best way in which to win his love, and yet in one story we are told how this man had so completely won over one of the roughest of his boys that when he was lying on what seemed to be his death-bed, this rugged Scotch laddie petitioned the doctor to let him have just one more whipping from 'Bulldog' to see if that would waken him out of his torpor, and stir anew his desire to live. Boys, and girls too, are very quick to perceive whether a teacher has any sympathy with them, and a very bad teacher is often better loved than a very good one by reason of his possession of this attractive force. When examiners have to be reckoned with, this may not be the best qualification; but in our work as Sunday-school teachers, which is to train the soul more than the mind, to awaken the religious faculty more than the intellectual, it is more than good, it is absolutely essential to success. It is wonderful to what lengths the working of this sympathy will go. I have known a class so utterly devoted to its teacher that the members considered it to be positive disloyalty to listen to any other, a sentiment which the superintendent was, naturally, unable to appreciate.

Once upon a time, in the beginnings of the Rhyl Street Mission, I put this to a rather severe test. My task was to teach the elder boys, a score or more of the usual London street arabs, newspaper boys, match-sellers, horse-minders, and the like, about as tough a

crew of youths as I ever handled, brimful of mischief and sharp as needles. One Sunday they brought a new boy with them, who came to create sport and generally wreck things. I let this go on for a short time, then pausing said: 'Boys, you know quite well whether I'm a fraud or not, and whether I walk six miles every Sunday for my good or yours—is this lad to lead you or am I?' In two minutes he was in the gutter outside, and the class settled down in perfect attention to our work. What other subsequent arguments they used I never inquired, but he joined the class later and was with us till I had to leave it. If anyone should feel inclined to resent my method, let him try a year in one of the schools in our London slums, and he will appreciate it better.

Sympathy is not merely a passive, it is also an active sentiment; one needs to get at the moral and intellectual standpoint of his scholars before he can raise them to his own; teaching is a constant and unwearying process of lifting up; and the tools by which we can uplift men are not the same for the East End and for the West. But if the desire to uplift be present, the very wish will create the fitting means.

Although it must be regarded as more mechanical than the foregoing, a readiness to comprehend and to meet opportunities is a very great aid to teaching. When I was a raw youth of twenty-two, I was sent by our missionary tutor to preach at a large

and important centre in the North, and strolling into the school in the afternoon was invited to take a class. Consenting readily, I was conducted along some passages, and then, without a word of warning, was thrust into the midst of a roomful of young women, some of them married and mothers. Imagine the situation! Nothing but the entry behind me of the Secretary to call the roll, and the sight of a pile of Bibles, saved me. Before he had called over the thirty or forty names, I had a question to ask them—‘How many of you have read through the Book of Ruth?’ The answer was quite satisfactory—to me, and we spent a very pleasant afternoon. Every teacher ought to have a stock of subjects ready to meet emergencies. He cannot expect to do his best under such circumstances, but he will save the situation, and preserve his own respect. Such subjects may be met with everywhere, in magazines, newspapers, ordinary conversation—one of the best addresses I ever listened to had as its text an advertisement with which the town was then posted. There is hardly any topic which cannot be so handled as to prove attractive, and made to open out the highest issues. A small note-book in which such topics may be jotted down for future use is a very valuable possession, and it is quite marvellous how the mere noting down of such topics sets some mysterious mechanism in the unconscious or semi-conscious recesses of the brain working upon

them, and gathering material which springs to aid us when we need it. The good teacher will always be a learner. Roger Ascham described him in his ‘Schoolmaster’ as ‘one that is always desirous to search out doubt, not ashamed to learn of the meanest, nor afraid to go to the greatest, until he be perfectly taught and fully satisfied.’ And the best manner in which to enable ourselves to teach others is to discover how to learn ourselves.

FELIX TAYLOR.

THE LITTLE TRAVELLER.

COME, little Traveller,
Join in a song,
Sweet as a robin’s,
Trilling along.

See! the bright morning
Brings a new day,
Saying: ‘With brave heart
‘Up, and away!

‘Uphill or downhill,
‘Straight as you can,
‘March to your duty,
‘Bold little man.

‘Happy and loving,
‘Gentle at play,
‘Try to grow wiser
‘All through the day.

‘God’s little Traveller!
‘He is your Friend;
‘Trust and obey Him
‘On to the end.

‘Then, as the sunset
‘Dies in the west,
‘Safe in his bosom,
‘Little one, rest.’—W. G. T.

Teachers and Scholars learning to know one another.



ONE of the most valuable lectures at the last Oxford Teachers' Session was given by Mr. A. J. Mockridge on what the Sunday-school may learn from the day-school. At the close he dwelt on the importance of the teacher knowing each scholar individually, but added that the means by which this intimate knowledge is to be obtained must be left to the teachers themselves to discover and practise. Given a suitable school-building, the scholars, a staff of earnest willing teachers, well-prepared lessons, it will still be necessary for teachers and scholars to know one another before the desired result—a successful Sunday-school—can be obtained.

There is also the advice given by superintendents to teachers from time to time to the effect that they should cultivate the friendship of the scholars, so that the Sunday-school should have an atmosphere of home about it. This piece of advice, the importance of which all will admit, is not easy to accomplish and follow during the short time the teachers and scholars are together. It will not be sufficient to use a few endearing epithets, as a fellow-teacher of mine did, claiming that in doing so he had solved the problem of

entering into friendly relations with his young charges. I was impressed at the time by his triumphal claim to have reached the goal so easily, and took an opportunity of watching his class and its behaviour. The result obtained was not satisfactory. No; as a French saying has it, 'Avant de s'aimer il faut se connaitre.' Know one another, then love one another.

This learning to know one another in the fullest sense of the words may be looked upon as a necessary part of the Sunday-school aim and work, a part of the complete whole. During the short time allowed for class teaching there is very little opportunity for the growth of friendly intimacy between teacher and taught. The necessary discipline and order, and the relations at the time between the teacher and scholar, preclude it. There may be a few minutes at the end of the lesson for a little friendly chat, often but once a week, but that will not be sufficient to bring about the required knowledge. Something in addition to the school routine and the time devoted to it is required.

For instance, a teacher taking a new class finds the difficulty of managing it, and declares that he must give it up and that he has not the qualifications of a teacher. The scholars, he complains, pay no attention, show no interest in what he does, and class time has been a continuous wrangle.

A superintendent must often have this difficulty to grapple with. His advice may be: 'Invite your scholars one

evening home to tea, and if that be impossible, a tea in the schoolroom might perhaps be managed. Spend an hour or two afterwards with the young people, and have a round game with them.' This plan enables a teacher better than anything else to enter into comradeship with his class, his position of leader is dropped, for very possibly he may by no means be the first in the game going on. Take such an evening spent, possibly three hours, and compare the period of time with the few minutes available for friendly intercourse on a Sunday afternoon, and its importance must at once be recognised.

It is on the basis of such social gatherings that I should advise little societies to be formed. The members of the society would be the members of the class, and no one else. The occupation, whatever it may consist of, should be provided without outside help; friends should not be invited to come to entertain the children, as the main purpose of the meeting is an opportunity for teachers and scholars to know one another. The meetings should be held regularly, either fortnightly or monthly. The fixing of the period would be governed by many circumstances, but mainly by the age of the children. Two classes of about the same age might join together, boys and girls; but the number then should not exceed ten or twelve, and the teacher or teachers should be as regular in their attendance as they would be at the school. The occupations and arrangements will, of course, alter to

suit the age of the scholars; the tea will, perhaps, be omitted altogether with the adults; and the meeting take upon itself more the nature of a club.

As to amusements,—round games, acting charades, puzzles, story-telling, and other modes of passing a pleasant time may be introduced; but the teacher should arrange his programme beforehand, bearing in mind that play-time to be successful wants organisation as well as work.

With scholars of older growth, who have reached the adult stage, let the little society form itself into a club with a constitution of its own. Rules should be made, officers chosen, and a small subscription levied to pay the expenses of a newspaper, chess, cards, or possibly the share of the cost of a bagatelle board. This constitution will transfer some of the responsibility for the proper carrying on of the arrangements from the teacher to the members—a very good thing to do.

To frame the rules, the young people should be invited to a preliminary meeting to discuss and agree upon them, an interesting experience for the teacher. I have before me such a preliminary meeting, some twelve boys of from fourteen to sixteen years of age being present.

They have perfect liberty of speech, and use it, speaking when interested, two or three at a time. I point out my preference for orderly speaking, then am silent, and watch how often order will develop naturally and without my interference, the young people

themselves finding out that simultaneous speaking is not effective.

The rules should all have been considered beforehand, the teacher obtaining a set from some similar club; these will probably answer, with a few alterations to suit special needs. Refreshments may be introduced, two members being appointed caterers to provide them, and this can be done well and economically if hot water can be had on the premises.

A portion of the time at the club's disposal might be devoted to a newspaper class, several of which have been tried and have been well spoken of. The leader during the week or fortnight's interval collects a set of paragraphs—six or seven will be enough—from the papers, relating to circumstances which promise a general discussion. The paragraph will be read out, the leader adding a few words, and the members having anything to say on the subject will say it, the speakers not standing up.

Dancing may with much advantage be introduced where there are adult clubs of both sexes. Let the two sections before joining together be taught to dance, and these occasions will not only provide healthy recreation, but also teach social refinement in manners.

Such clubs for senior scholars might meet once a week—Saturday evenings for preference—but not oftener; for it must be borne in mind that this meeting together is not to compete with an evening

school, taking up time that might be profitably spent in educational improvement. Indeed, the teacher should use his influence towards directing the club members into such ways as may enable them to make the best possible use of what leisure hours they have.

Another way of learning to know one another may be provided by means of a Saturday afternoon ramble of teacher and class, and this suggests a further development—one that has been adopted in several instances to my knowledge with marked success. A teacher has taken his class to a little seaside home, spending a week with the young people, helping them to make the best use of their holiday and joining them in their walks, bathing, and rowing.

A Sunday school class after some such experiences will afford a happy time to the teacher, and he will no longer complain of the want of attention and good-will on the part of the scholars. The hours spent together will not only be the happier, but the effect of the lessons given will be more beneficial and lasting. The teacher will regain confidence in himself and his powers, and no further complaint will be made to the Superintendent as to his qualifications and capacity to take a class.

ION PRITCHARD.

‘WHEN labour is saved, God has so made the world that there is a sort of whispered signal or watchword spoken—*Pass it on!*’ So writes William Brightly Rands, whose two volumes—‘*Lazy Lessons*’ and ‘*Lilliput Lectures*’ (Bowden)—will help all teachers of little folk.

SUMMER SESSION PAPERS.

What Sunday Schools may learn from Day Schools.

RECOLLECTIONS FROM A LECTURE,
BY A. J. MOCKRIDGE,
AT THE OXFORD SUMMER SESSION FOR
S. S. TEACHERS, JULY, 1900.

In writing from my notes of the lecture, I have ventured to put the 'Recollections' in the first person, because it seems to make the whole so much more life-like and interesting.—M. P.

THE Sunday School teacher has certain advantages over the Day School teacher, in that the work is (theoretically, at least) undertaken voluntarily, and for the love of it; while the day school teacher may have only taken it up as a professional duty, as a means of earning a livelihood. How is it then that, in spite of this, the results attained by the day-school teacher are, in some respects, so much more satisfactory than those which follow the Sunday-school worker? The answer is to be found in the fact that the Sunday-school

teacher *has not studied his Art*. For teaching is an Art, and to be successful he must have learnt at least something of its essential principles.

One of the more important parts of a professional teacher's training consists in his studying what has been done in the past; he must learn from the experience of those who have gone before what methods have been found good, and what errors have to be avoided; if he fails to do this he will have to learn from his *own* experience, in the gaining of which his pupils must, of necessity, suffer. Now this form of preparation for the office of teacher is quite within the power of all who wish to qualify themselves properly, and I strongly recommend that the lives of Froebel, Pestalozzi, and others, should be read by Sunday-school teachers. Quick's *Essays on Educational Reformers* (published by Longmans) is an excellent book for this purpose.

Next, we have to remember that the aim of a good teacher in the day-school is not so much the instilling of knowledge as the culture of the mind; book knowledge *may* be a mere training

of the memory. But with the Sunday-school teacher the real goal is Character; the object of the lesson, whatever form it may take, is the uplifting of the spirit, the development of a higher ideal. It is interesting to know that Sir Joshua Fitch, one of our highest authorities on the subject, speaks of the history of the Jews as being one of the most helpful to the teacher in this connection, because instead of dealing with politics in a general way, it deals directly with men; it is Moses, and David, and others, who are presented before us; and it is with essentially human character that the Jewish records are concerned.

Three points must be striven for by every teacher:

1. **To know his pupils.** To know them, not only as they are in class, -- for that will only show one side of their character, -- but as they are out of school. He should join them in their play, see them in their homes, mix with them, when he can, in their daily life, in order that he may gain a real knowledge of their nature, and so be able to help them to develop out their very best.

2. **He must cultivate tact.** Perhaps one of his scholars gives a clumsy answer to his question; don't let him brush it hastily aside, or he will discourage the lad. And, indeed, if we try to get behind into what is really contained in some of these clumsy answers, they may give us an insight into our pupil's mind that will help us to understand something about him that has hitherto been a puzzle.

[And here I will venture to interpolate a passage from a conversation in a book, *The Double Thread*, which well illustrates this recommendation of Mr. Mockridge.

'Tact can be -- and ought to be -- acquired; though, like amiability, or generosity, or any other virtue, some people are naturally more largely endowed with it than others. We ought not to excuse a man for being by nature tactless, any more than we should excuse him for being by nature selfish; for tact is merely the outward form of that inward grace we call unselfishness.'

'Then how would you train people to be tactful?'

'I would teach them moral perspective, -- that is to say, the power of looking at things from another person's point of view, whereby they will see rocks of stumbling and offence, which otherwise would have been hid from them; and seeing, to avoid the same.'

3. **He must cultivate patience.** This is a virtue that every teacher must strive to acquire. Failure to practice it will not only bring failure of purpose, but also humiliation and a sense of shame. 'I shall never forget the lesson taught me by one of my dumbest pupils,' said a teacher to me, 'when, on seeing his sum all wrongly worked on his slate, I had impatiently turned upon him with angry words of reproof. Such a wounded expression came over the poor boy's face as he faltered out, "Indeed, sir, I really am doing my best!" It made me sadly realise the wrong I had done through my hasty speech.'

PREPARATION OF LESSON.

Although a teacher cannot know too

much about the subject he is to teach, he must be careful not to bewilder his pupils' minds by betraying his 'vast store' of learning! He must distinguish between the essentials and the non-essentials of his lesson, and he should not give undue prominence to details that may be interesting to his larger mind, but which, to that of a child, can be but imperfectly understood, and therefore will be looked upon as so much uninteresting matter.

Further, he must arrange his lesson in an orderly manner, leading up by careful steps, until the climax is reached.

And then he must consider well how best to lay the facts before the scholars. In order to do this he must project himself back into the past and become a child again; must ask himself 'should I have understood that illustration then?' 'Should I have known the meaning of that word, that expression?'¹ This retrospect will be of immense service to the teacher; it will make him choose simple language, it will warn him against mere 'lecturing'; **amplify, simplify**, these are the keynotes for the giving of a successful lesson.

It is often asked whether it is good to use MODEL LESSONS. Model lessons are most valuable as suggestions, but they must not be followed exclusively; for though these are the outcome of certain knowledge of the writer, yet we know that he has a store behind

and around his subject from which to draw should occasion arise. But if a teacher relies wholly upon the model lesson for his knowledge of the subject—well, for one thing, he will often find himself in an awkward position when his scholars ask questions which he is quite unable to answer!

It is much better,—especially for Sunday-school work, where the subject is only the vehicle for the real lesson—to take up something about which you have a personal knowledge and in which you are yourself interested. For instance, if your hobby is bee culture, your pupils will get more pleasure and profit from a lesson upon that, than they would from the best Model lesson given at second-hand. The teacher's love of his subject, combined with a sympathetic love of his scholars, are the mainsprings of good teaching whether in day or in Sunday-school. Tackle your subject in your own way, but use every suggestive thought, or book that you can find to help you.

But, whether you have prepared your own lesson notes or are using those prepared by someone else, do not look at them when giving your lesson. The eye of the teacher should be on his class; we all know its wonderful influence, and if the teacher is reading that invaluable assistance is lost.

Do not be stereotyped in your lessons; change of subject will bring with it variety of treatment;¹ and do

¹ The Golden Age, by Kenneth Graham, is a story of child life which is full of suggestion for those who want to learn how things look from the child's standpoint.

¹ School and Home Life, by T. G. Rooper (Publishers: Brown & Sons, 5, Farringdon Street, London) is a book well worth the attention of teachers,

not make your lesson too long, twenty minutes should be the limit, as a rule.

And remember that the aim of your teaching is CONSTRUCTION—in your case it is construction of character. And you will find much in the Bible which is well suited for this purpose; the first psalm will give an excellent example of its possibilities in this direction.

Questioning.

This is a most important part of the lesson, and the teacher should ever be on the alert to make a right use of the answers given. He must note when these are leading away from the subject; must know how far he may allow himself and his scholars to digress from the matter in hand. Such digressions are sometimes most valuable, but the teacher must be able to keep the control in his own hands, or the whole time may be frittered away without any real good having been done.

‘Wise questioning is the half of knowledge,’ said Bacon; and certainly, from the standpoint of both teacher and scholar, it is of great value. It shows the teacher how far he has made his lesson clear and intelligible—how far his efforts have been successful, in fact—and it secures mental action and co-operation in the scholars, and these give life and interest; for who does not know the quiet listless expression on the countenances of many a class of boys or of girls, as they passively sit by while the teacher delivers—a soliloquy?

Again, by well chosen questions we can impart knowledge; indeed we can

evolve it from the children themselves out of that which they already know; by leading them on from point to point towards the spot to which we desire to bring them. Is it not, therefore, worth our while to take some pains to acquire this valuable art of questioning?

Questions must be well chosen, and should be given in a brisk interesting manner, in clear, simple and direct language. They should be to the point, and only tend to one answer.

Here are a couple of examples of ‘how *not* to do it.

A teacher stood up in front of his class with his hands behind him. ‘Now boys, what have I behind me?’ he asked. One suggested ‘hands,’ another ‘coat tails,’ and others things equally true or possible; but no one was right, according to the master. Taking his hand from behind him he displayed a bunch of feathers, saying, ‘Feathers, you see; I am going to give you a lesson on Birds!’

Again. Another teacher began his lesson with ‘Boys, cast your eyes out of the window, and tell me what you can see?’ Answers came readily enough; ‘a pump,’ ‘the school yard,’ etc., etc. But these did not satisfy the questioner, who at last exclaimed ‘Well, I see light; and now I am going to give you a lesson on Candles.’

Questions that allow of ‘guessing’ answers are bad, and so are those which require only a ‘yes’ or a ‘no.’ Again, it is not advisable to ask for the definition of a word—definitions are most difficult to find—but it is better to ask

for an illustration, or a contrast. A question which is too general is not desirable; 'What can you tell me of Moses?' for instance, may lead the child into a perfect mental labyrinth.

It is best to put the question to the whole class and then call on some one individually to answer. Do not allow all to speak together nor any one to volunteer, otherwise the timid and lazy ones will be left out altogether. Some of our best authorities insist that the question should always be retaken in the answer; and this plan is excellent, because it makes the sense complete and shows that the scholar is not simply answering in parrot-fashion.

There is no time now to go into the great question of School Discipline, and how far it is required in Sunday-schools; but I should like to emphasize the important fact that, unless there is order, no lesson, however well prepared, can be successful.

The responsibility for order is divided between the Superintendent and the teachers. While the general order of the school is in the hands of the Superintendent, the teachers ought to be responsible for it in their individual classes. Every child should have sufficient space to sit properly, and all the scholars should be well within reach of the teacher's eye.

Classes must not be so close together that the voice has to be raised unduly, nor where what is being taught in one class is able to be followed in the next; this is a fertile source of disorder in many a Sunday-school.

Where attention has been paid to these essentials, and where there is a friendly feeling between teacher and scholar, very little difficulty should arise; and the loss of a mark—the outward sign of the teacher's disapprobation—will generally be sufficient during the Sunday-school hour to keep up a proper sense of discipline and order. But of one thing teachers should be most careful; never to warn unless prepared to act; for it is fatal to all authority if scholars find out that a threatened punishment is merely a threat.

ILLUSTRATIONS, so called, ought always to be neat, accurate, and quick. Do not let them dawdle on your hands. There is nothing that tires an audience (young or old) so much as when they have to think faster than you do. You have got to keep ahead of them. Do you know what it is to walk behind slow people and tread on their heels? How it tries and vexes one! You know how people are vexed with a preacher who is slow and dilatory, and does not get along. He tires people out. . . . With illustrations, there should be energy and vigour in their delivery. Let them come with a crack, as when a driver would stir up his team. The horse does not know anything about it until the crack of the whip comes. So with an illustration. Make it sharp. Throw it out. Let it come better and better, and the best at the last, and then,—be done with it. H. WARD BEECHER.

Child Study.

I.—The New Child—Old Human Nature.



NEW child has come to the school door and is to be enrolled to-day among the scholars. What do we know about him? His name is a fresh one, his family are newcomers to the district; we never saw him or his people before; what they work at, where they live, how many there are of them at home, how old, what previous schooling they have had—especially this new boy himself,—all these and similar particulars are now to be learned and duly entered on the Superintendent's book, or in the teacher's mind. Henceforth he becomes one of us, and we promise ourselves that we shall get to know more about him as we go on.

Good; but the prospects of going on prosperously together depends on his being not quite such a stranger, after all. It is true that we never saw him before,—nor did anyone else on earth till eight or ten years ago. He then came into a family as a new baby, but more or less intelligent expectation and more or less suitable provision were there before him. All this was possible because though the individual baby was an absolute novelty, baby nature was not. And now the individual boy stands before us sturdy in boots and breeches, a hitherto unmet phenomenon; but he comes not unheralded,—boys innumerable

have warned us to treat this boy properly; if they have not effectively prepared his way for him, if our opportunities of getting ready for him have been neglected, he will do his part, faithfully if painfully, in opening our minds to the necessities of the case, and so making us fitter hosts for the next boy guest who knocks at our door.

We may smile a little ruefully perhaps as we recall certain passages in our education as teachers; the mistakes we made as to the facts of the case, the blunders we have made in method have no doubt at times been such as to make the didactic angels laugh at us, if they were not more inclined to weep over the fate of our unhappy victims. After all it must be acknowledged that the man who would grow roses should know something of the nature of rose bushes, something of the aspect they prefer, the soil that nourishes them, and the enemies that most attack them. If my friend the doctor is getting a new gardener for his vineries, I observe he particularly inquires if the candidate understands grapes. *Perhaps we should get more fruit and blossom in our moral gardening if we were more thorough in our attempts to UNDERSTAND boys and girls.* That is the whole burden of these remarks. It is a glorious thing we are called to do as teachers, glorious beyond anything (I think) on this green earth. It is to play to the children the part of sunbeams and breezes to the buds, to help them to

open out so as to give and take the beauty of being in all its manifold forms,—to think and by and by to act for themselves; finally, to become helpers themselves in turn, and so carry on the divine creation of full, intelligent, productive manhood and womanhood. If we should make this glorious work most inglorious through our stupidity, or laziness, through want of the most obviously necessary self-preparation, how shall we excuse ourselves?

You may think I am about to add one more to the great pile already existing of elaborate programmes ingeniously manufactured for our benefit as teachers. You recall, with but slight effort, probably, well-meant sketches of what the perfect Sunday-school teacher ought to know, of what he ought to do, and especially of what he ought to be. There is little to be found fault with in such schemes, except that they are rarely, if ever, practicable. You would justly push aside my suggestions in connection with child-study if you found them to contain things manifestly impracticable. And it would be very easy to deserve such censure. I have spoken of *understanding* children as a gardener understands the vine. The ideal implies a great deal. It is 'the nature of the plant,' says the gardener, to require this or that treatment. What shall fit us to speak as positively about the nature of the child? It involves so much. We have apparently stumbled on the whole problem of human philo-

sophy. Our study of the child would certainly seem to be sadly incomplete till we have learned how he is made up, mind and body. Physiology and psychology stand forth as the two special handmaids of wisdom in this field of inquiry. There is much to be learned from each. I understand it is part of the curriculum in teachers' training colleges to study these important branches of science. We may be bold to say that no teacher ought to be the worse for such study, and some may be decidedly the better. If you have time and patience to master one or other of the excellent manuals now to be had dealing with physiology or psychology, you will doubtless get your general notions on the subject considerably extended and arranged in useful order. If you will never forget that a human being, however lowly, is always more worthy of attention than any book about him can be, and that when you have learned the labels put upon his parts and functions, bodily or mental, you have yet to deal at first-hand with that very surprising thing, himself,—you will gain much from downright definite study of things so little associated as a rule with the Sunday school teacher's preparation as these branches of philosophy.

II.—The Secret of 'getting on' with folks.

But I want to say something that shall neither encourage the lazy fellow who trusts to his 'genius' and despises

rules and solid learning, nor seem to disparage solid learning in one of its most honourable temples. What I want to say is for the encouragement of those earnest people who know well, —too well—that, even when they have toiled long to get the stock of knowledge they require, they will have secured it in only a very moderate degree, and who are yet so imbued with the passion for young souls that they do not wish to leave off doing their best with the little stock of wisdom they can actually get and keep. Let them remember, then, that admirable as ordered knowledge is, and the discipline of steady and discriminating thought,—admirable, and in some degree, indispensable,—there may be obtained much valuable knowledge and precious training without recourse to learned books and lengthened studies in college. I knew a scientific man whose knowledge of physiology and allied subjects was very great, far above the average. But many an average student made a better doctor than he. So, unless report is much mistaken, there have been theologians sent out from college with a whole library of metaphysical lore in their heads; but men less learned have proved the better parsons. The fact is, to understand men, or children, something is wanted that books cannot give; it is the something that enables the doctor to 'get on' with his patients, and the minister with his people, and the teacher with his class. Now, it is notorious that

some people have this knack of 'getting on' with folks around them, and others have not. Can the knack be acquired? It is no use asking its secret from the failures; but those who succeed best are generally as little able to account for their success.

The probability is that here, as in all realms where high excellence is attained, there is, in the skill we admire, an element that passes self-consciousness. We must not, of course, for a moment suppose that any really clever worker or producer will depreciate earnest thought, persistent endeavour to know the rules and opportunities of his art, or diligence in applying his energies to the particular task in hand. Orator, painter, composer, poet, preacher,—whatever special art is practised, the true man knows well that it is work, and not play, that he has undertaken. Nevertheless, there may be moments when an added impulse seems to come we know not whence, and lifts the worker to an excellence unconceived as yet, even by himself. The teacher sat down ten minutes ago with his class, mostly familiar to him, but with here and there a newcomer; and, see now, he and they are all aglow with the same happy delight, or tender interest in the story he is telling. Talk of the 'labour of teaching'—this is not labour, any more than when the singer is flinging his joy of existence into some rolling melody. This in the lesson, or the song, is *life*, abundance of it at the right time, in

the right place, and in the right form. Books have not given it, nor any hearsay. There is knowledge there, doubtless; but there is something more.

As to the knowledge of the man who 'gets on' with men—observe, I cling to that expression, because it seems to go to the centre of this business; for if we don't 'get on' with people, grown up or children, there is no business at all for us;—I say as to the *knowledge* of him who 'gets on' with people, it has no doubt been acquired by more studious habits than he always gets credit for. Allow that what we call 'gifts' differ,—nevertheless, most 'gifts' that are worth anything to the world are those that have not been neglected. When this man came into the world he had eyes to see with, and a mind to be impressed with the meanings of things; he has kept his eyes open day by day, and has gone about putting two and two together in a profitable way. If he has had the advantage of scholastic training, he has jealously preserved and freely exercised his native powers of observation and deduction. No philosopher that ever was can delude him into bartering away the tried old lamp of his own sense and judgment, for the new lamp of the latest theory of things. If he is wise he listens to all well-meant reports of others as to the world; but when all is reported, the world itself is greater, and he lives in it (if, indeed, he be alive)—as truly as the cleverest reporters around him. I think, then, here is

part of the secret of 'getting on' with folk,—a man understands them because he really and freshly looks at them, watches them, actually and vividly hears them so as to thrill responsively to the varying tones of this marvellous speech of ours. Pardon me if I seem to hold that a living man is a rarity. There is so much that is automatic in our life, so much that merely echoes and imitates, that we go along the streets catching the merest fraction of what they have to tell us, and the faces and words we know least vividly are those that are most familiar.

If it were not so, if one of us were right alive as he stood at the desk before his fifty or a hundred and fifty scholars, if all the signs on those young faces were read as one reads a telegram, eager for the last least syllable of its message,—how much more potent the sight would be to draw us forth to these young hearts in words and looks of wise and stimulating helpfulness! If one lives in daily touch with children, how continuously varied is this appealing message—'come and help us'! This practical study of the child-mind is probably open to us all in greater or less degree. I grant that even the practical student may grow weary of study at times, as 'Ecclesiastes' did over his books; but there is something wrong if one would rather read a tale about a child than have an hour's life with one. I do not say the something wrong is something wicked; it may be

only a defect as yet, a crudeness in us that will ripen by and by. But woe to us if we are not growing freer from such defects year by year, and learning, with all thanks to poets and dramatists for their past help, that life itself is to fiction as substance is to shadow.

III.—Another part of the secret of 'getting on.'

I have not yet ventured, however, on giving my guess at the other part of the secret of the successful student of child-nature. The one part, I repeat, is alertness, sensitiveness, constant observation of the real movements of life in the child at its work and play, with its companions and alone, in its loquacities and silences, in its joys and troubles. The other part, if I know it, brings us very near to the gospel of the great Lover of children;—and at the same time it has a homeliness about it that almost needs an apology—or would do, but that, with the gospel at its side, it may be as happily careless as a sparrow. If I say the doctor gets on with his patients because, with all his learning, he is a *man*, the proposition is easy enough to understand. I hope it is equally easy to see that he who gets on with children must be a child himself. Most people appear to have been young at some time or other, more or less guessable,—the happiest because most successful student of child-nature is *always* a child. There is no past tense with him; 'to have been' is

fatal. 'Except ye become as little children,' there is no entrance into this particular kingdom of heaven. There is a charming book of essays called 'In the Golden Age'—probably known to some of you. The writer very cleverly takes his grown-up readers back into the world they used to live in, the world where the 'grown-ups' seem to belong to a different race, and are studied from afar by that keenest and freshest of students—the unspoiled child. You may remember (with chastened feelings) how unsparing the youthful critic is of the elder folk as he describes their stupid ways, their quite easily penetrated disguises and make-believes, and, above all, their incapacity to see the amazing wonders that lurk in the meadow at the bottom of the garden. How many youthful critics there may be making similar notes on you and me is a sobering reflection; and yet there is a possible chance of escaping their otherwise unerring shafts. The book referred to tells that there was *one* visitor, at least, who knew, and was really up to something. Their getting on together with him was a brilliant success. I believe he was only a curate, so there is hope for some of us.

Now, I trust I shall not be blamed after all by any Nicodemus who thinks the suggestion that the teacher should be a child with the children is, for reasons chronological or otherwise, one more impossibility. There are, no doubt, degrees of difficulty here as

elsewhere. It would cost Nicodemus an infinite degree of pains to become a child again; he is so learned, so grave, so sad at heart, so—foolish in short. He might have kept his stiff self supple by bending lowly every day since the years began to drop those misty curtains between himself and childhood under which a man must stoop if he would creep back again. He taught my class once—I mean the class of which I was a member. Poor Nicodemus, he didn't understand boys then,—I think I understand him now. There was a child somewhere in his nature, just as the life of the tenderest bud and juiciest cluster is somewhere along that dry brown stem of the vine. It is lovely, at times pathetic, to see the child struggling out of those hard-husked natures, as it will in spite of themselves. Very serious persons get suddenly tickled with one of Nature's playful moods, and they forget their wisdom and are wise. They wonder, and don't wonder why they wonder; but they just do it because they must, as the children do. It is a little bit of the half-forgotten language of youth come back to them. If they would thus wonder more and oftener they would have less cause to wonder at the failure of some of their well-meant lessons.

IV.—What is in the Child-mind?

See, the boy who has been enrolled in our school to-day is yonder in the class where we sent him—the teacher is a good honest fellow, who really

thinks about his lessons, sometimes. He has a stock of manuals, from which he teaches in turn. But the new boy is undeniably yawning, listless; not pulling the next boy's hair, that is a liberty which only a longer acquaintanceship could excuse,—but, truth to tell, the little fellow is getting no good at all out of the lesson. Well, how can you expect it? He came here to-day a little excited perhaps, and no doubt somewhat confused in his notions of the school; you would say his mind was a blank as to any lesson he might receive.

The child-mind a blank! Don't believe a word of it! Not a bit of it! His mind was no more a blank than the bit of chemical paper on the match-box. You bring the right kind of match and he, that new boy, all unknown by name as he was till now, will infallibly help your match to get alight. The operation is reciprocal; the success, if any, belongs in part to both. With the fact of the boy's being a boy goes the capacity to be 'amused' (as we say)—let the word cover all varieties of interested delight. A very little child-study will tell us that besides this capacity there is in that boy (being a healthy one) a fund of energy impatient to expend itself on something; how can he sit still, and think still, and just do nothing but what is called 'be good'? Someone says that to be good is to be good for something; it is the only way that boy is going to be good. His spoiled elders will sufferingly sit still and

pretend attention; it's a sad drill they have practised until at last they think it one of the natural virtues. It is not; nothing is less natural; few things are more harmful than to be compelled, or to compel oneself, to pretend attention when the mind is not truly engaged on the matter in hand. Now, children must assuredly 'attend,' or they will lose the benefit of self-control; but he who studies the child's nature most wisely will see that by way of leading to the grand consummation of self-mastery, attraction to the lesson is ever better than coercion. If I engage the child's interest and enlist his own powers of memory, imagination, reasoning, judgment—so that he is doing something himself and doing it with me, we shall 'get on' together. But that it may be so, let me be a child with him, if bigger; let me bring all I have of wider experience and range of thought, and reduce it to the common denominator of the childhood which ought to be mine, old as I am, no less truly than it is his. Only so shall we understand each other.

Let us go back a little. I have, by way of illustrating the fruits of child-study, referred to qualities which are found to be so general as to be practically universal in child-life. He who names 'wonder' and 'love of action' has before him two of the most obvious and persistent features in the history of every healthy child's days, however various they may otherwise be. One might add a love of 'rhythm'

in connection with both sense-impressions and energies at work,—a feature seen in many ways, as in the love of song and recited verse, and the good old-fashioned tales with their well-jointed sequences and repeated phrases. It shows itself in the charm of associated movement, such as drill and dancing. Perhaps a deeper student might detect a rhythmic quality, not only in the highest forms of devotional utterance, but in the thinking that gives rise to them.

But while we look for the universal qualities in the child-nature, it is obviously necessary to guard ourselves from any possible assumption that since there is so much fundamental similarity in children, one method of culture may be devised for all. Of course, every one's experience shatters such a theory. You sit down with a class of eight boys and a little one thrown in, and their varieties of temperament shall be almost as numerous as there were rates of rowing in the famous 'Varsity boat at which the coach hurled his pulverising sarcasm, 'There are eight of you and eight times!' You may by and by get all the class to pull steadily together, but as they are minded at first this result seems remote. The 'dispositions,' as we call them, differ much more in children than some of us are apt to recognise. Grown-up people have become so marked by their prevailing moods that they may, indeed, be easily sorted out as under different categories,² *e.g.*, cheerful, gloomy, severe, impatient,

excitable, prosaic, imaginative, and the like. With children the undiminished natural susceptibility to respond to any new stimulus may partially disguise their native varieties of temperament. The schoolmaster is merry, and all the boys laugh with glee, 'counterfeited' or not, as the case may be. The schoolmaster frowns, a painful sobriety settles on each juvenile brow, and compresses each pair of lips. The breeze blows west, and all the green ears of corn slope this way; it ceases or reverses, and they slope the other way. Yet these human seedlings are no more all of a length and richness than are the ears of wheat. Some are seen to be characteristically gentle, timid perhaps, affectionate. Others have the pulse of adventure in their veins; they are either mischief lovers, or the prompt and serviceable officers of the class and school, according as their several abilities are seen and used, or not. All like to be amused, but not all in the same way. The capacity for imagining is generally distinctly present, but it may be in widely different degrees. The leading mental proclivities are also as variously directed, and in as varying degrees, as the moods of children differ. All this indefinitely increases the complexity of the study of the nature of the child as he comes before us. Some things we see at a glance, and we shall be safe to reckon with them; but it may well be that some comparatively minor thing, unseen and unsuspected, complicates a problem otherwise soon

solved. It appears, indeed, sometimes as if the problem of the child were quite insoluble. The little one is persistently 'naughty,' we say; he sulks, or frets, or is passionate; we say the lad gives trouble, although the teacher is pretty sure he does not mean it; or the lesson fails to catch him one day, though a very similar one succeeded the other. In considering all such cases—and they form the subject of a good deal of earnest and often perplexed thought, of parents as well as teachers—there is, I suspect, and certainly I would hope, a wholesome rule at the back of our minds. The rule is this:—The cause of whatever failure we have met with in the child is probably more innocent than evil. Without falling into any silly and mischievous strain of optimism as regards human nature, admitting that there is in every one of us a capacity to be bad—simply and inexcusably bad—does not a close study show that very often what we took for naughtiness was 'reflex action,' and rather a proof that the child was honestly alive than that it was wilfully bad? It behaves so because it more or less must. To revert to our unfortunate new-comer now repeating that same old yawn while the teacher painfully prosed along—with such a dry lesson, which the teacher himself finds dull,—how ought the boy to behave, if he is what Dickens called 'a human boy'?

V.—Seek out the 'Causes' in Conduct.

Our Sunday-school philosophy, like

that of the Roman poet, must be to search out the causes of things. Why, let us ask, is the school so noisy? Why is there generally a squabble in that corner before the afternoon is out? How is it that this boy and that are generally talking when they shouldn't be? Why do those girls look so dull and vacant when the lesson is over? There is, in every case, a sufficient reason; and if we want to get different results we must simply see that the *reasons* for them are sufficient.

In our search for causes, if it be carried out thoughtfully, we shall inevitably find out a very important thing, not long, indeed, to be missed by any intelligent observer, yet too apt to be forgotten as we blame the child or blame ourselves, and wonder at our futile efforts to help him along. It is the fact that the child and his world are two sides of one whole; and though he and I meet at school we live for the most part in different worlds. See what prepossessions he brings with him, even at the earliest school age! He has his own home, all belonging to himself and his folk,—a circle with its own special atmosphere and vocabulary, with its peculiar history of troubles and pleasures, its traditions of the elders and stories of kinsfolk. Its furniture and ornaments are fixtures on the stage where for him life's daily drama goes on; the pictures on its walls are silent actors in the play with him, and day by day they give him his cue, and his mind responds to them, as it never will to any other.

'Father,' 'Mother,' and probably 'Granny'—how great a space in his world is filled by those presences; and in their measure, his mind is affected for good or ill. The scenes in the street, and the neighbours close by, cluster thickly about the young life, supplying matter for meditation, models or aversions. It is his own world the boy brings with him,—how should we not be patient if, trying to read him and his world aright, we stumble and mistake before the double complexity! And if, in spite of all these and other difficulties, we spell out the one or two significant words in his life story, and are able by that fragmentary knowledge to infer so much as to the rest that we usefully help him to grow in his world, and not be imprisoned by it—so much the more gladness ours.

VI.—Are we not all Children?

To sum up: we have reminded ourselves that, our function as teachers being to cultivate and help what is alive in the child to become its best, we owe it to simple reason,—to say nothing higher,—to understand with some degree of adequacy the nature which we are trying to cultivate. Books of science and philosophy (to which might be added good stories of child-life if the choice between good and bad were not a serious difficulty with many people) and direct teaching from the lips of those who have assiduously studied the subject, ought to prove very serviceable to us, if only

they help us to order our own reasoned judgments and do not impose on us some artificial system, or lead us to forget that child psychology is not the same as the psychology of adults. The escape from all such cramping and misleading influences in philosophic study, is to be found in that habit of faithful and sympathetic observation which is instinctively formed by people in general, but which might probably in most cases be greatly strengthened and perfected. To the invigoration of our perspective faculties, so employed on the child-life around us, the essential thing to be added is to live as children with children.

How can this be considered a counsel of perfection! Grant that we have seen many summers and they have seen few,—is there one of us who is not still a little child in the vastness and variety of this beautiful world? Grant that by the aid of books and experience we have climbed on to a hill here and there so that we can look around us to wider horizons of knowledge—are there not gaps enough in our learning, and mists enough on the edges of the circles we have explored, to remind us with Laplace that ‘what we know is infinitesimal, and what we do not know is infinite’? Suppose that we are strong, and our eye is keen, and our right hand can do for us many a thing that serves our uses and enriches our life, bodily and mental; yet are we not the veriest little ones with That which is the great worker,—are we not, also, kept in an

embrace without which we should be helpless as motherless babes? Our religion, too,—is that so much more certain in its pretentious complexities than the elementary motions of the young life towards the dimly seen Father of All? It would be wrong to say that manhood has no elements beyond those of childhood. One is the bud, the other is the flower, and all real education is devised to help the flower forth into its purest and sweetest and completest grace; but bud and flower are nourished with the same life-current. The teacher and his class alike awake to wonder, grow strong by effort, pray one prayer in varying accents, and sing one song of praise. If we are children with the children we shall understand them best, for, however strong we may be, compared with them, we shall still feel their needs and share their simple spiritual comforts; and thus we shall best work for them and with them. Of one thing we may be sure,—the variety in their natures will always keep our work from growing monotonous.

See that lad, who has rather disappointed us to-day by being so dull and irresponsible, is joining in the closing hymn with all his might. He has come at last on something that he knows and enjoys, and piercing below all his disguises it has ‘found him’ also. The wise student knew he was *there* all the time, and the wise teacher would try to ‘find him’ early and keep him ‘found.’

W. G. TARRANT,

Wanted : Men and Women.

I.—The Sickly Potato.



OME men are born to face problems all their lives; some men make problems for themselves; and some men have problems thrust upon them, whether they want them or not. These problems present themselves at very unexpected times. You do not want them, for instance, when you are on a holiday; and yet you cannot escape them. My last one came to me in the Mediterranean. A fellow-passenger bought a copy of Tolstoy's 'Resurrection,' at Malta, and straight-way handed it to me for my perusal. I had the holiday task given me of reading it, and of sending my opinion of the book after my fellow-passenger, who was to leave the ship at Naples. I knew, of course, that I was in for something out of the common; but I never anticipated such a fierce revelation of the horrors of civilization as we have there given to us.

In many ways a strong book, in some ways it is a decidedly dangerous book, and to me it is not quite satisfactory or convincing. Here and there it seems to writhe in agonies. It is 'realism' in its most naked and crudest form. It is the most unnatural book I have ever read. You do not get large spaces; you unconsciously yearn for what is known as 'idealism'—a

touch of poetry to shine like a glory round the prose of life. You are compelled to meet the deformed, the twisted in mind and body. You will look in vain for a thoroughly good woman in this book. Even the picture of the hero's mother cannot be introduced without a suggestion of something base or mean; and when the author refers to the tenderest sacrament, the seamy side of 'the business' is immediately brought to your notice. The book lacks the dignity of reserve. There is such a thing as manly outspokenness, but a greater than this is manly reserve; and the strongest men I know are those who have a force of reserved strength, knowledge, and affection, which in some way keeps their lives above the common-place. And it is so in literature. I said all that and a great deal more, in my little attempt at criticism.

But 'Resurrection' left me one problem which perhaps came to me at first from its literary side. A girl, one of the principal characters in the book, is said to have grown up 'like a potato in a cellar.' This is a graphic but terribly sad touch, and remained with me. She is kept in a foul atmosphere all her life—physically and morally foul—until you want to cry out, 'Oh for a clean woman, with a touch of human charity to take her out of it!' Does it do any good, I asked myself, to keep people like sickly plants in cellars in order to scrutinize their want of wholesomeness?

But a good friend on board the

steamer took the problem out of my hand—made me put the microscope on one side for the time being—by giving me a simple every-day task to do instead; and I do not think I shall ever forget the great lesson he unconsciously taught me.

He was the ship's doctor during the first cruise, and an ordinary passenger like myself during the second. He was one of the most charming men I have ever met, — simple as a school-boy, although he had something like ten letters tacked on to the end of his name. These, I should think, had never altered him in the least degree. He was a medical missionary, engaged in noble work in one of the crowded districts of London. It would take too long to tell you all about this noble man—to me he is a volume of good sermons. I can only say here, that we became very close companions ashore and at sea.

Now I must give you a short description of another passenger, before you will be able to understand the drift of these Mediterranean reminiscences. This second passenger was one of the most curious characters I have ever met in fact or fiction. In real life, I have come in contact with men on all the rungs of the social ladder—say from model lodgers up to millionaires; and in fiction, like most of you, I have mixed with almost everybody from Monte Christo to the Little Minister. In all that wide experience, I never met this man's counterpart. I have only time to give you a rough sketch:

a finished study would take too long for my present purpose. He was a young man of about twenty-seven; rather low set, with bent rounded shoulders, sunken chest, long arms, big shapeless hands, and heavy flat feet. His hair was of a reddish hue, rather closely cropped, and inclined to curl. Now, all that would have passed as a thing unworthy one's notice, if his eyes, which are so often the redeeming feature of the face, had not been possessed by the very incarnation of the spirit of restlessness. He took hasty, hungry, frightened looks at everything and everybody. He even smoked his pipe or cigar in the same nervous hurry, stealing furtive, restless glances to right and left as he did so. He was always on the alert, as though he expected a calamity. He never dreamed by day, and star-gazing was an unknown luxury to him.

When you spoke to him, he uttered a hasty monosyllable in reply. Nothing ever seemed to fix his attention, and I never once saw him absorbed in a book or paper. He merely glanced at them. I watched him over and over again, and wondered what all this meant—what was the secret of it. It seemed to be something very different from that excessive self-consciousness which troubles many people at times, and of which they are ashamed. He never looked ashamed, and never seemed to be conscious of his self-consciousness—if it were that. I made up my mind that this young man must have suffered from sudden nervous shock at

some time, or that he had been brought up under a tyrant of whom he stood in constant dread. While I pitied him, I could not help theorizing about the reason of his great affliction. You must remember, that I had the big 'Resurrection' problem troubling me at the time, and so was ready with my quick hypothesis. Most of the passengers ignored him completely; and life on board ship is like life ashore—you are readily attracted to men of taste and temperament corresponding with your own. Cliques and groups soon form. But this was not the way the doctor treated this strange passenger. He would not leave the man to himself. He tried to make him talk: he made him play the ordinary deck-games, ship's quoits, bull-board, and so on. Sometimes I joined in these, or marked the score for the other two players: very often I simply watched them. The man played as though he were suffering agonies: his face twitched, his eyes shot quicker glances than ever, and his short jerky throws made it utterly impossible for him to approach anything near success. But this patient doctor persevered. He made room for the afflicted man at his table, and over the meals endeavoured to find out what he was most interested in, to make him talk about it. But the good man failed completely, and he confessed his failure to me.

'He doesn't read anything,' the doctor said. 'He has no opinion about anything; he is not interested in any-

thing, and he won't try to be interested. I do not think God notices our failures, if we only try our very best. But that man won't even try. The greatest sin in the world, I think, is not to try. God will not forgive that. Do help me to bring him out, he'll listen to you. You know how to talk to a man calmly and quietly,' and so on.

That was the doctor's text or motto: 'The greatest sin in the world is not to try!' I did not want to commit the greatest sin in the world just then—and so I tried to help the doctor. I became his disciple, and would have done a great deal more for the simple good-hearted fellow. The encouragement I received as a reward for my little efforts was most touching: 'I saw you talking to — this morning. I think we'll bring him out yet.' I once spent a whole day ashore with the poor fellow, and honestly I do not think I got more than a dozen words out of him the whole of that time. But the doctor thought I had done splendidly. And so it went on. I do not know whether I did any good or not; I only know the doctor did me a lot of good. That was the doctor's strong point: he not only took an interest in the weak and the afflicted, he wanted to try and do something for them, and make others do something for them. He pulled me together. I was too busy just then studying the why and wherefore of Tolstoy's last book; but this good man gave me the practical task of trying to steady the

restless hungry eyes of my fellow-passenger. He brought me down from a troublesome piece of fiction to the duty of a living fact. One was a problem—perhaps only a literary problem—the other was a little bit straight out of the heart and mind of the Man who went about doing good.

It is a curious thing to notice how many men pride themselves on their platform work, or their pulpit eloquence, —they think their real strength lies there; when, if they only knew it, they are doing more real good by coming into close contact with a single individual than by all their mighty efforts, laboured and confounded up on high. I stood on a shaky metaphysical sort of platform, weaving theories and trying to make a fine discriminating analysis of character, and wondering whether I was correct or not, when I pointed out for the edification of my friend that the key-note to Tolstoy's 'Resurrection' lay in the sentence: 'She grew up like a potato in a cellar;' but the doctor practically said, 'Come down, sir; here is a little bit of work for you to do. See if you can do this man any good!'

II.—Step Down.

Now, I should like to step down from my pulpit and platform, and say to all good men and women: Here is a little bit of good work for you to do, in our Sunday Schools. Come into close touch with these boys and girls around us. You see them with the restless

eyes, the mis-shapen moral characters, standing at the street corners? 'Unhappy degenerates'—and why? Often and often, because they have not been fortunate enough to come into immediate contact with a wholesome-hearted man or woman. They need a moral physician as their friend. You may have learning, you may have fine literary taste, you may take a keen delight in art, you may revel in the luxury of philosophical disquisitions, and be ready to walk ten miles to hear a preacher like Stopford Brooke (and so would I); but a pleasure exceeding all these, and one to which these will be added with greater delight, is the pleasure of coming face to face with young struggling souls. Come down to them. Come down to them in your manly simplicity, in your happy abandonment, in your noble self-forgetfulness, and great will be your reward. Talk to them in a spirit of calm persuasiveness; yea, and in red-hot passion, if need be.

What is it boys admire the most in a man? They admire his genuineness, his manliness, his directness, his generosity, his true nobility. His worldly position, his wealth, his learning are quite secondary with them. His character is the thing that tells. They do not analyse all this, and there is no need for them to do so. But they are drawn by that subtle magnetism of sterling character unto every true man, and held there; and they revel in their bondage. He goes out to them to win them. His sympathy gives him

insight, and makes him quick to note and seize the appropriate occasion.

Again, what do you admire the most in a boy? You admire his transparency, his simplicity, his innocence, sometimes even his impudence—but always his honesty. That impudence can be disciplined into confidence with fine restraint, and that exuberance of vitality be made to flow in the right channel. And *you* can do it, helped by the grace of God. It is not an impossible task for the *genuine* man to undertake. You and the boy meet on common ground, for instance, if you are fond of humour. Healthy men of Shakespeare's land should hold it as a priceless gift. Do not be afraid of it. It is a great purifier, and tests sometimes with the swiftness and intensity of the fires of God. Cant very often shrivels up at its approach, and sickly sentimentality cannot stand the heat thereof.

You may have a soul-searching indignation against the wrongs and follies of the world. But see to it that it be *soul*-searching. A righteous indignation is a whip with the keenest sting in the hands of an honest man. Let it go against rotteness and meanness and falsehood in high and low places. You may be—

Dowered with the hate of hate,
the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

You may have the instinct of hero worship,—a small man in a small place when you weigh yourself up with all

modesty—but with a great reverence for the strong sons of God the wide world through, and in all spheres of influence. I dare to call upon you in the name of God to make use of these rich endowments. You have the will, here is the way; you have the best of all material, the method will shape itself.

And added to these, you may have pity; pity for the weak and oppressed, for the sad and lonely, for the fatherless and the afflicted, for the neglected and down-trodden. If you feel the pull at your heart-strings, if you have experienced the rush of bitter sweet tears scalding your eyes at some tale of woe and desolation, let not this be forgotten as an idle dream; be not ashamed of it, rejoice in it; push back the tears to their source, and go forth nerved and thrilled to redress all wrong, to soothe all sadness, so far as in you lies. For this is an indication that you are alive—that you are a man, gifted with a man's strength made sublime by tenderness.

What sad *waste* there is in the world—not only waste of our substance but waste of our talents, our noble spiritual powers.

Dare we let these lie idle any longer?

III.—Teach Life.

If after this, the weak stereotyped question, which is almost an anticlimax, is put to me, 'What can we teach?' what can I say except exclaim

Teach! Teach what you have and are: your genuineness, your sense of humour, your manliness, your large generosity, your charity, your true nobility; teach them in every way, in all ways; through your scorn of scorn, your love of love, your hate of hate, your hero-worship, your sympathy. You have all this ready *now*—and more, you have the manliness of Christ to help you; you have the glorious Gospel of the living God as an inspiration. This will enlarge you and edify you; this will lift you out of the valley of despondency, and set your feet upon the hills of holy exultation. Thank God that you are alive, that you have the power of showing to others how beautiful a thing it is to be alive. If we need more passion in our preaching, we need more life in our teaching. Everywhere, the cry is: for life, life—not for death. We serve the living God. Believe me, this is true for ever, ‘A man never knows what freedom is until he becomes bond-servant unto God.’ Rejoice in your strength, rejoice in your life, in your holy freedom, and again I say rejoice.

We are constantly making one great mistake, as it seems to me. We are too fond of speaking of the glory of the past and the wretchedness of the present. ‘The giants lived in olden times, the dwarfs are with us now. We are caught in a mesh of commercialism, and there is no escape, we are told. Mighty science has the masterhood, and everything is held by bold utility with brazen hand. Our old-

fashioned towns and villages have almost passed away. We have cycles and motor-cars, railways and electric trams, huge advertisements, and ugliness on every hand. We are too fond of tennis and football; we indulge in too much laziness in our leisure, and too much utter foolishness in our pleasure, and there is no health in us or about us.’ So the indictment runs. But worse than this. ‘We have no great poets, no great preachers, no great prophets now. They are dead and gone, and we are left to grope along in the twilight of our poor mediocrity. The children are not quite the same as we were in the days of our innocence; the boys and girls are too precocious; youths and maidens become men and women long before their time. And, saddest thing of all, we have no reverence left; our chivalry has gone: our moral tone and temper have departed.’ If I believed all this, I would say at once: ‘Then it’s about time we were all buried; for we are dead.’ But I don’t believe it. This age is the best we have personally known, and when *we* are alive it is full of beauty, interest, and divine possibility. The men who have influenced me most, are men like the ship’s doctor—men who have given themselves up to the doing of some little bit of good; men who have not simply attempted to look big upon the platform of pessimism; but men who have said, ‘Act, act in the living present, Heart within and God o’erhead.’ We have these now; God will provide the genius in His own

good time. To these pessimists I would say: You yourselves do not show enough reverence for the times in which you live, for the possibilities of God wrapped in the common-place swaddling clothes of the present. Where will the next poet or prophet come from, think you? The next prophet may be that pale-faced boy in your infant class, and you have not even spoken to him yet; the next Nazareth, this ugly city in which you are compelled to pass your heavy days. Our earnest expectation and hope is ever with the young, and they are always with us.

My practical plea, therefore, is this; We want living men for teachers— young fellows who can play cricket and football, and who hate deceit as they hate poison; and big, tender-hearted men with that indefinite delicacy which adds so much to true dignity. And we want to keep them faithful to the work. The biggest and the best men I ever came across, are the men who can do anything without looking clumsy. They are the ones who can even carry a baby without making it cry, and enjoy a game of rounders in such a way as to win the approval of the youngsters. The weakest men I ever came across, are those who scorn cricket, look with contempt upon football, and turn the point of every pin the wrong way to the discomfort of the baby when they attempt to carry it. They sometimes try to quote Herbert Spencer. They like to make you think that they love to meander in a mazy

motion through the groves of mediæval philosophy, and talk about 'the idiosyncracies of the psychological temperament,' much to their own mystification and the muddlement of the man in the street. These may be more or less ornamental in a meeting of 'degenerates,' but to find salvation they must step down from that platform. They can never make successful Sunday-school teachers in that mood, and they certainly never find the Sunday-school the ideal nursery ground for the spread of their 'philosophy.'

Sunday-school is the place for sterling, sanctified common-sense, and the humanities. Integrity always finds itself at home there. The reward is in the work itself. I never came across an earnest Sunday-school teacher yet who could be called a fool in a worldly sense, and never one who was sorry for the time he had spent in the place. In the spiritual sense, his gain is a gain to the glory of God: in that there is always gladness.

Sunday-school teachers are ever kept in a state of sanity and clearness of vision. Why? Because their scholars force them to hold closely to the simplicities of life—and in these are salvation. The ten commandments are not dead—we need them every day—and the two great commandments have had such life poured into them, that they must live for ever. Pity, humour, honesty, trust in God, are always edifying, Rectitude and rightmindedness are always wanted in the Sunday-school—and these ever make daily

duty a pleasure, and even put a halo round the head of common drudgery.

'Is the work worth doing?' some who have never attempted it may ask. I answer, 'Yes, it's the best possible work any man or woman could undertake.' You hesitate about trying it. Remember what the doctor said: 'The greatest sin in the world is not to try,' There are so many of these little ones—ay! and youths and maidens—growing up like 'potatoes in a cellar.' The good strong men and women of the Sunday-school want to bring them out of darkness into light, and make them like trees planted by the streams of water.

But we need more help, more practical sympathy. We want more comrades to work with us shoulder to shoulder. Nearly all our Sunday-schools are hungering and thirsting for the life and inspiration of healthy men and women. We cry for the fresh breeze of new vigour and energy, the delight of self-sacrifice, the courage of sanity, the simplicity of straightforwardness. We want the steady hand of the strong man to be pressed in loving kindness upon the shoulder of the restless city lad, to make him look with steadfast eyes towards the man he ought to be and can be with the help of God. There is nothing in the wide world that touches me more than a sight like that,—because there is nothing holier than the holiness of helpfulness.

IV.—The Greatest Sin.

Men and women belonging to the Church of Humanity, the Church of the Divine Love, must take to heart that cry of the good doctor, 'The greatest sin in the world is not to try.' The world needs constant personal help, devoted service in all efforts for the redemption of mankind. Yes, and I would say, the salvation of England needs it. Tolstoy may expose the wretchedness of Russian society; some stern prophets would say we are no better in this happy land of ours. But we have one way of salvation,—and I know none better. It goes to the root of the question. Our Sunday-school, if properly equipped and worked, if made to hum with the fire of human enthusiasm, the radiance of the heart red-hot with the passion of high sincerity and true devotion—our Sunday-school, if the noble men and women of England would but give themselves up mind and soul to the duties awaiting them, would prove one of the chief means of our salvation to the end of time. Platform patriotism is cheap, and lasts but for a day; God's patriotism last for ever, founded on eternal love. Are the members—the living men and women, the gentlemen and gentlewomen of our churches, doing their duty—doing all that *their own clear consciences demand*—in this great question of the welfare of our Sunday-schools? Can our schools fare well, when so many life-giving men and women remain religiously outside their portals?

Does it not sometimes happen that we are impressed with the thought—which we cannot, even with the help of all our charity, quite shake off—that too many of our churches are simply taken up with the infatuation of their own salvation or position? What is a successful church? Alas! we differ so widely in our ideals, and some of us are never satisfied. The members of my ideal church are not they who rest content upon the bright beautiful bank of the stream of their own salvation, nor are they those who are always finding fault with our flatness, our dulness, our deadness. They are men and women whose souls are often filled to overflowing with the bitterness of divine discontent—a medicine given for the healing of the nations—until all the dark places are open to the light of day, and the sunshine of innocent gladness. Their song is ‘Come, labour on.’ Can the ideal church ever forget the children, the youths and maidens of the ‘slums’—who are crying for they know not what, and with no language but a cry? We *know* their need. They are struggling like potatoes in a cellar, struggling toward the light, the air, the sunshine. We want these good men and women to cross the river and help us—to come down from their platform of respectability, and use the healing touch of brotherhood. Ought any suburban church to be allowed to sleep secure in its own happiness, when a great restless city lies so near with its dens of infamy, its neglected masses, its waifs

and strays, flotsam and jetsam of society waiting to be redeemed?

We don’t want to be hypocrites; but most of us here do honestly say this: We have no ambition to be either a member or a minister of a suburban church bent simply on its own salvation. How can we persuade these shopkeepers, bankers, business men to come over and help us? We want them. They are good-hearted men on the whole; their wives and sisters are clothed in sweet womanliness. What made them? They are not entirely ‘self-made.’ Had they no friend to help them in their days of struggle—no good teacher to give them counsel; to take their hand, to steady their nerves—perhaps even to lift them out of the cellar in which they were groping for the light, into the green pastures of prosperity and the knowledge of the Lord? If they had, then by the memory of their great devoted friend, now dead and gone, we call upon them for their help and sympathy, their manhood and womanhood, their strength and sweetness.

Isn’t it an inspiring sight to see a good man among a band of happy boys—to see a good woman on the seashore with a crowd of city urchins pressing round her? That sight always grips us; we are constrained to watch, and make a song of thanksgiving to ourselves in praise of the goodness of the human heart. Everybody stops before that altar, and offers worship there. I have overheard the roughest seaman on the sand say to himself, ‘God bless

her!' while he chuckled at the original antics of the youngsters. Every woman is sacred, as she stands in the centre of a ring of children; every man is dignified, when he makes himself one with a band of boys.

We talk about our true democracy; how can we get it, unless we make ourselves one with the weakest and the poorest—unless we are eager to take them into the atmosphere of the best and brightest that we have in our possession? 'He grew up like a potato in a cellar' is one of the keenest reproaches against our so-called Christianity. That will be made impossible immediately we see our duty and do it.

Oh that these good men and women, members of our successful churches, could be made to see their duty, and forego the pleasure of their Sunday afternoon slumbers, concerts, and promenades, for the sake of our common cause. Subscriptions are good; to take the chair at a concert or open a bazaar is a pleasant function, and happy is the man who can do it with a big result. But is that all? We think not. We want these men themselves; we want them to come into personal contact with the most important part of our labours, the many institutions connected with our Sunday-school—our cricket clubs, ramblers' clubs, social gatherings of all sorts—and chiefly with the Sunday-school itself. We talk about our elder scholars feeding the church: good, but who is going to see that the Sunday-school is properly nourished?

The superintendent of every Sunday-school should be in the proud position not only of having a working staff of teachers, he should have a reserve force on whom he can call at any moment: men and women who are ready to step off the platform of their theories, their respectability, their philosophies, from the pulpit of their beautiful platitude and poetical commonplace, their socialism and Homerism—step down into the arena of simple things, and do them willingly and graciously for the children's sake. Men and women are needed in order to transplant these struggling lives into a fairer atmosphere, to protect and nourish them by the power of human fellowship. Boys and girls, youths and maidens want to be taught how to grow up clean in thought and word and deed; and to do this, they must be brought into the large, cheerful presence of honest, whole-hearted men and women who know life and enjoy it in all its fulness and beauty. There they are, these little ones, sick, hungry, thirsty, in the prison-house of ignorance; their restless eyes need the steadying power of a glad, earnest will to fill them with interest, and make them dream of high and holy things. To those who strive in any way to do this noble work, there comes at some time or other their large recompense in the old sweet words: 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.'

JAMES L. HAIGH.

What the Average Teacher may do.



AM to tell you what the average Sunday-school teacher may do with and for his (or her) class.

I had intended to begin by defining the 'average teacher.' But that is somewhat difficult; it would take up precious time; and moreover it is not needed. For practical purposes, what we all know needs no definition. We all know ourselves and our regular comrades in this Sunday-school work, and there is no mock humility in saying that most of us are only average teachers. The fact is, that all, except those we call our best or our better teachers, — all others are average teachers. And so you will not misunderstand me now, if I say I want to show you what any teacher—even the humblest—can do. Of course, what the humblest teacher can do the highest teacher may do; and, to that extent, what I have to say applies to all. Only, please remember, all along, that it is the average teacher I have in mind; and if I say nothing of the big things which the better teachers may do, it is because I am trying specially to speak only of the things which any teacher can do.

Such a subject is very important, if for no other reason than this,—that it is upon the average teachers that our Sunday-schools have mainly to depend.

Of the 700,000 teachers within the Sunday-schools of the United Kingdom it is safe to say that at least three-fourths of them are not above the average. And yet they are the backbone of the Sunday-school system, as at present constituted. Without them the Sunday school could never have done its noble work, and could not now have the existence it has.

I have an intense sympathy with the average teacher. I see him (or her) in every school I visit, on all sides of the school, with all kinds of classes, I see him (or her), in our school and others, doing most of the work, such as it is. And I cannot but admire them. For to them the work of teaching is often hard indeed. They have not sufficient teaching skill to find a joy in the very exercise of their art. They have often not knowledge enough to feel the pleasure of conveying it. They have too seldom that conscious object in their work which gives such pure satisfaction whenever attained. And yet these average teachers—some of whom perhaps feel about once or twice a month that they would like to give up—hold on year after year. Whatever be their motive—some sense of gratitude or duty to the school, some devotion to or desire to please the minister or superintendent, some vague love for, or dim wish to help, the children—whatever be their motive, there is in these average teachers an endurance at any rate which almost amounts to heroism. Now those are teachers toward whom my heart goes.

out. I long to help them, or to see them helped. They are the rank and file. The great captains can take care of themselves.

And here let me say, that in telling you what the ordinary teacher can do, I shall really only be naming and setting in order the things which average teachers have actually done.

Be Punctual.

Suppose now we begin at the beginning, and take what may seem to be the little things first. Well, the average teacher can be *punctual*. No genius is needed for that! And, mind you, punctuality in a teacher means a few minutes before the time! As brigades seemed all the go, I suggested to our teachers that we should be 'A Five Minutes Early Brigade,' for the good of the school. Three minutes, or even two minutes, before the time, make much difference as between a teacher and a class. And for this reason: the man who is on the spot first, in almost anything, has a psychological advantage over later arrivals. Nelson used to say that he owed all he was and did to the fact, that he was always a few minutes early. But there is more than this in the case we are considering. For purposes of teaching and learning, the first question is: Whose influence is to be most active during the lesson—the scholar's or the teacher's? The teacher who is at school before the scholars—or even before the bulk of the scholars—takes the easiest course of obtaining the upper hand; and if he

obtains it at the outset, he is more likely to keep it all through. Of course, even the most brilliant teacher ought always to be in time, and would do well to be early; but the average teacher simply cannot afford to be late, and thus let the children give the tone—the governing mood—to the class before he (or she) arrives. That, as a rule, means that the teacher has to begin the lesson with an exhausting struggle for order and attention, whereas, by being early, he might have had the order in a much easier and pleasanter way. Three minutes' influence gained over your class by simply being present and pleasant as the children come in and take their seats, one by one, may be a saving of ten or fifteen minutes' strength and feeling afterwards—may be, and often has been, the saving of the whole morning or afternoon.

So much for punctuality.

Be Regular.

Next I pass on to say, that any teacher can be *regular* in attendance. No extraordinary powers are required for the practice of regularity. But teachers often do not realize the power for good which regularity in itself gives them over their scholars. In the irregular teacher the children lose a certain amount of faith; and all loss of faith in a teacher is, to the children, a loosening of faith in character generally. The faithful teacher, by simple faithfulness alone, does more than he imagines to build up in the children's

minds and hearts the kingdom of integrity. But there is another point. You know the old fable of the hare and the tortoise. The tortoise won the race! You recollect, also the fable of the sun and the wind and the traveller. It was not the blustering wind which made the traveller take off his cloak, it was the persistent sun! And life shows us, in many spheres, that it is the regular things, the constant influences which tell, and, in the long run, which make and mould human character. Believe me that faithful regularity of attendance with your class is in itself character-making, not less to you than to the children.

Be Cheerful.

And now I want to emphasize another thing which any teacher may do. It is this: He can surely meet his class good-temperedly, nay *cheerfully*. I am not sure that you can teach anything in a bad temper. Certain I am, that neither the excellent nor the ordinary teacher can in 'a temper' teach religion—and, least of all our religion. But, whatever you may be trying to teach, and whatever you may have been privately passing through, go to your class cheerful. Oh yes, it can be done by anybody! Try it—try it again—and you will see! I have not time to argue it out, and prove it by many instances. But please understand that cheerfulness is not a matter of temperament or circumstances; it is a createable and a cultivateable quality by all who will.

I ask you—whatever your temperament—to test this fact. Simply be cheerful—as you can be by an act of will, and as you can more easily be when your aim and motive are to help the happiness of others—and you will find cheerfulness grow from an effort to a habit and from a habit to a spirit within you. Children like a cheerful teacher, as our gardens love a sunny day. Do you feel not cheerful? Put that feeling aside, in the presence of your class. Think of the children, their outer and their inner life, their needs, their dependence on you, and then, if you can do nothing else, say 'For their sakes, I will cheerfultize myself.'

Punctuality, regularity, cheerfulness—after all, are these only little things? As Wendell Holmes reminds us, the philosophers have never yet decided whether life is a little bundle of great things or a great bundle of little things. Be it as it may, these things I have named so far, whether small or large, are the hinges of success to the average teacher, and are the things which any teacher can do.

Well, now we must move on to the lessons. What may the average teacher do in regard to lessons?

It is obvious that the humblest teacher must give some lesson. A lesson of some sort every teacher gives—or professes to give—each time he meets his class. It may not be a great lesson, there may be not much in it; but the humblest teacher knows he has to fill in the allotted time some-

how or other, and experience teaches him that the giving of a real lesson to the children is the most economical way of using up the time.

Prepare the Lesson.

This being so, then the first thing I want to say upon the point is that any teacher can prepare his (or her) lesson. Note that I use the word 'prepare' in the widest possible sense. For example, if you have only made up your mind before you go to school what lesson you will take, you have prepared to that extent. Suppose it is only a reading lesson, and you have read over at home what is going to be read in class, you at least know something of the lesson beforehand, and that is preparation. But, as you see now, the average teacher can easily do more preparation than that. If he (or she) does less preparation than I have stated, need the average teacher wonder if he fail to gain or keep the attention of the children? Would the average teacher himself pay attention for twenty, thirty, or forty minutes to a preacher or lecturer who had evidently never thought beforehand of what he was saying? Surely the least that a scholar ought to expect of any teacher who wants his attention is that the teacher should have something to tell him, or ask him, or explain to him. Put yourself in the scholar's place, and imagine what it feels like to 'sit under' a teacher who has got no lesson to give! Would you be good? I don't

believe I would. True, an average teacher may have seen a first-rate teacher take a class at a moment's notice, and give a capital lesson. Do you think that lesson was given without preparation? Never! You might as well expect a new-born baby to begin giving an explanation of Newton's 'Principia,' as an absolutely unprepared man or woman to give a lesson. The lesson may not have been prepared that day, that week, or even that year. But prepared it had been certainly. The facts, the truths, the principles, the illustrations, had all been stored away and associated in the mind of the speaker, and if he can give them out, and adapt them, and apply them at sudden call, it is because by previous preparation and use, he has gained the knowledge and acquired the art of conveying it. 'You could never do that,' do you say? Then there is all the more reason why you, as an average teacher, should prepare your lesson, however humble or simple it is. Even the first-rate teacher cannot, as a regular thing, do without immediate preparation. Old Dr. Thompson, the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, once quietly rebuked a young undergraduate who had rather sneered at age, and had been somewhat over-positive in the debate over a serious matter—when Thompson, with quiet irony, replied and said: 'We are none of us infallible—not even the youngest of us!' It will be just as true to say: 'We can none of us do without preparing our lessons—not even the

poorest teacher that ever taught.' No, you must prepare your lesson somehow, if you are going to have the least success as a teacher, or the least pleasure in teaching. 'Until you have tried this, don't think yourself a failure. Someone once asked Dr. Bartol if he didn't think Christianity a failure, and he replied: 'I cannot tell; it has never been tried.' To the average teacher, I say 'do not lose heart; do not imagine yourself a failure until you have properly tried this simple and sensible talisman of making such preparation as you can, and as it suits you and your class, whatever kind of lesson you give.'

Shorter Lessons.

Now, as to the lesson itself. Here, in passing, may I venture to put in a plea with all whom it may concern, for shorter lessons in our Sunday-schools? Lessons in many of our schools are much too long for the average teacher and the average scholar. They are even longer than a day-school lesson, with all its helpful apparatus, its trained teacher, and its authoritative discipline. The consequence is, that the last ten or fifteen minutes between the average teacher and scholars is often a trying time! I think one of Wesley's saying was, that in preaching there were no souls saved after twenty-five minutes! I should be inclined to say that, with average teachers and scholars in a Sunday-school there is not much teaching done after an actual lesson of twenty minutes.

If there be any truth in this, what

are we to do? Suppose the school meeting occupies an hour or a little more, how is it to be filled up if the average lesson is to last only twenty minutes? That, of course, is for each school to decide for itself, according to its own needs and circumstances. And, as a matter of fact, this is what some schools have done. In earlier times, about twenty minutes respectively were devoted in the Sunday-school hour to reading, writing, and arithmetic. That day has gone. In one later school I have heard of, there are two teachers present with each class, one keeping order and the other teaching, and when one has finished his lesson the other begins! These must be average teachers with scholars above the average! Another plan I have heard of, is that at a signal in the middle of the hour, teachers change classes, and give their lessons over again. This, again, is pretty rough on the average scholar.

Doctrine and Devotion.

What we have recently done in our school with success in the afternoon, is the following: Starting at two o'clock, nearly ten minutes is necessarily taken up in the opening exercises, the separating into classes and class-rooms, and the settling down to lessons. Each teacher has then half-an-hour with his (or her) class. At twenty minutes to three, lessons stop and all re-assemble in the large room,—all except the infants, who are already on their way home. Then the notices are given out,

And then, that doctrinal teaching shall not be entirely neglected, we spend a little time in repeating together reverently some of the great truths we believe, with a few words of explanation by the minister on this point or on that, with a few questions here and there, to make sure that it is not mere sound we are learning, but vital ideas—living truths. Then, that the devotional spirit may be developed in all who gather in our Sunday-school, we spend the next few minutes in one of the services with music at the beginning of our hymn-book. All this may not be much each Sunday; but let it go on Sunday after Sunday, not mechanically but livingly, and there comes into play that character-moulding power of regularity, to which I have already referred, and which in Nature, in history, and in God's education of the human race, is one of the most potent you can find.

But even this arrangement of Sunday-school time leaves the teacher half-an-hour to fill, and, of course, if he be a teacher above the average he can fill that half-hour, and yet not much more. At least, if his scholars—even young men—be only average, he can't impart to them much more at one time than what he can put into them in an active half-hour.

Still, there is the average teacher who, except occasionally, finds twenty minutes long enough. What of him or her?

Well, when I come to my final and, as I think, my most important point.

you will quickly see how much of this extra ten minutes which is troubling us can be well and wisely used.

Learning by Heart.

At present, remember, we are concerned with the lessons which the average teacher can give. And, with the average teacher and scholar in my mind, I want to speak once again for a good old method which was abandoned, because carried to an extreme in the past—as good things are apt to be, just because they *are* so good, until there comes a reaction, when we are apt to throw the good thing, along with its abuse, utterly away. I refer to the custom of *memorising*, or 'learning by heart,' as our fathers and mothers called it. I have heard all the stock arguments against this, when have, as far as I can, duly weighed and tested them; and they do not alter the result of my experience. Would not most of us, if we had our own time to come over again, take some trouble to store our memories and thus furnish our minds with more of the great words of Poet and Prose-Writer, of Psalm and Gospel, of Prophet and Apostle? For these things, learned in childhood and youth, become, as has been said, not merely 'memory *gems* but memory *germs*,' which grow with our growth, and unfold new depths of help and inspiration, as the experiences of life enable us more and more to understand the great things stored up within our memories in childhood and youth.

Long since I have given up the notion that you must only teach a child what he fully understands. At that rate you would have to teach him next to nothing. Moreover, how do you know what he does or does not understand? I believe a child often understands as much as a man, especially in spiritual things; and all the more so when you don't confuse him by an intellectual explanation. 'Do you understand now?' demanded a mother from her boy to whom she had read and then explained a great poem. 'No, mother,' said he, 'I'm afraid I don't now; and yet I did before you explained!'

Let me, then, advise the average teacher to spend some of the time every Sunday in this memory work with your scholars. Don't attempt a great deal. And you yourself do all that you ask your scholars to do. Whatever you choose for learning let it be worth learning. It is as easy to learn grand words as it is to learn trivial ones. As you would not hang any daub in your drawing-room, do not dare to hang any trash within the palace chamber of a child's memory, or your own. A good hymn (by instalments), a noble verse of Scripture, a few lines of some true poet, a golden sentence from some spiritual teacher—make your choice among these (and if you cannot trust yourself ask somebody's help). In any case make the treasured words your very own, by taking them into your own heart first and loving them; then teach them, in

your own way, to the children. They will understand sufficiently if you teach reverently. Some day—though not now—they will stay themselves, in danger, in temptation, in sorrow, in sickness, in misfortune, and in death—as I have seen both men and women do—on these memorised words, especially of hymns and Scripture, which they once 'learned by heart' in the Sunday-school class.

Time fails me to go into further details on this point, as to the children learning the words at home as well as with you at school, and as to getting whatever words you teach them so engraved upon their memories, or, I would rather say, so engrafted in their minds and hearts that if you ask for the words at any time, almost if you woke them from their sleep, they should remember them and love to remember them, not only for what the words themselves mean, but for the happy and sacred associations in which you enshrined them. My point, you recollect is that this is a kind of Sunday-school work—and very important work too—which any average teacher can do. And, as you see, that extra ten minutes which we did not know what to do with will all be taken up by this memory work. My own opinion is that it is best to *begin* your class work with these repetitions. This gives you that point of contact which average teachers often find difficult to get, but without which your lesson is not likely to go well. In other words, this opening memory work together puts you

and the scholars mentally in touch with each other at the outset, and then they are ready for your lesson. So you slip into your twenty-minutes' lesson. If you can link on your lesson to the sentiment or idea contained in the words you have been learning together, so much the better. And this, of course, can easily be done if your lesson be from the Bible. Whether it be one of the lovely old Genesis stories, or a psalm, or a parable, you can usually, with some care, select a verse which contains the central thought or the leading idea. Let this be learned first by the whole class, and said *together* (quietly) and, in some cases, separately. That verse learned by all, you can go on with the reading of the story, the psalm, or the parable, to, at least, some helpful purpose. Even if you are not able to explain every phrase in the reading, or elucidate the full meaning of each verse, you, at any rate, have that governing note—that central thought or leading idea contained in the text learned—you have that to guide you and your class in understanding the chapter you read. Nay, if you and your scholars go from school that afternoon with nothing in your minds but just those golden words you have learned together, you may have done them more moral and spiritual good than if you had been clever enough to have entered into a critical examination of each line and paragraph, and clean forgotten that greater thing, the sense of God in the soul of children;

to this even the average teacher can appeal, and he can so use Scripture as to give wondrous power to his appeal.

Need I say, in this presence, that no teacher can know the Scriptures too well, either critically, historically, or in any other way. If he possessed all Mr. Carpenter's vast and varied knowledge of the Bible he would not know too much. The more a teacher knows of the Scriptures, if he is a wise man, the more reasonably and reverently and helpfully will he interpret their great lessons to old and young. But I want the average teacher to feel that the moral and spiritual lessons of the Bible are the best which any—even the highest—teacher can ever give, and that, in his measure, it is just these lessons which the average teacher can give by the method I have suggested. And do not forget that it is better in one day to fix one great living truth in the minds of your scholars than it is to daze them with a mass of explanations and opinions, however true.

Let the Scholars help.

One other word to the average teacher on this matter of lessons I must not forget. It is this: Whatever subject you are taking, give your scholars plenty to do in the course of the lesson. Do not treat them as buckets into which you pour, pour, pour, and they remain silent and still. Let them co-operate with you. They like to be in at it actively. Ask them questions. Never talk long without

asking them about it, and see if they are taking it in. Let them say something separately and together. Or get them to write something down. Make use of pictures and objects. Invent ways by which your scholars—and especially the lively ones—may share in the lesson. Only take care that everything you utilise does tend to the teaching. Always keep clearly in mind that it is the lesson, and not the mere activity, which is the main thing; and utilise activity only in so far as it advances the lesson. ‘How many bad boys does it take to make a good one?’ asked a teacher, half in fun; and the troublesome boy himself answered with a smile, ‘Only one, if you know how to treat him!’

Be a Friend to the Scholars.

And this brings me to that final and crowning thing which an average teacher can do. I might have put it first, for it comes first. But it also comes last, and ought to come all the way through a teacher's connection with his class. It is this: The average teacher can easily be the friend of his (or her) scholars. ‘I had a friend’ was the master secret of Charles Kingsley's life, to which fact he attributed all that was good in him. And the same is true in millions of other lives. More good is wrought by friendship than this world dreams of. God has made it so. Almost the dearest thing anyone here possesses at this moment is friendship or a friend. Think now of your scholars.

In their human hearts also is that divine hunger, ‘I need a friend.’ Are you somewhat older than they? That is an advantage to them. Are you socially a little above them? That may be all the better too. They believe that you are wiser and better than they, and to be believed in and trusted in this way is a moral and spiritual education to yourself. Were I to tell you of some of the blessed results of true friendship between teacher and scholars, beginning in a school and lasting till death, you would almost feel that the best work of the Sunday-school had been accomplished by such friendship. And here is another point. There is no sin in desiring to be well thought of. Most people have that desire. And I have never yet seen any surer or more lasting way of winning the love and gratitude of those you work for than that of being the friend and teacher of Sunday-school scholars.

And it is so easy to be on friendly terms with your scholars. Only you must be really friendly. There must be no such thing as force on one side and fear on the other. And there must be no patronising or condescending in the matter. Moreover, the friendship must not be merely general—that is with a class as a whole. Have a friendly word or two with each of your scholars individually, if you can. You will find what a difference it makes. He becomes yours, you become his, by a personal tie. And don't confine all this to Sundays.

A real friend is a friend all the week through. True friendship does not depend on day or dress.

As to details of how to do these things, few directions are needed when once the average teacher's heart has got to work. Friendship finds its own way of expressing itself, and, what is equally important, of fostering and caring for itself. As the old Scripture has it: 'He that would have friends must make himself friendly.' Even truest friendship requires consideration, forethought, tact, and life.

For example, even if it be only once a year, it is a good thing to invite your scholars to your own house. If your house is not big enough, it is the next best thing to have them by themselves at the school in a social way on a week evening.

Equally good is it in the summer to make a little garden party for your scholars, if you have a lawn, or a friend will lend you one. It is good to go for a country ramble together—you and your scholars alone. As a rule, it is not good, or it is not quite the best, to invite a lot of others to these parties or meetings between you and your scholars. The parties should be special to you and them if they are to serve the special purpose of knitting more closely and more finely the friendly bonds that bind you together. Many classes that I know have a picnic or excursion with their teacher at least once a year, going off by waggonette or railway to some chosen place. This costs money; for

each scholar, as a rule, pays his or her own way. The money has been previously saved for the purpose, at anything a week which any scholar can afford. For months the teacher acts as banker, and receives the small deposits of the scholars each Sunday. This paying in and booking is often done during that school half-hour we spoke of, and takes up some of that ten minutes over-plus of time. It sometimes leads to a little talk about the places already visited, or about the place they are going to visit. Yes, and there may be an ethical, certainly a social—yea, at times even a spiritual education in all this. Clearly these are very practicable means whereby the friendly feelings between teacher and scholar can be helpfully exercised, and, however feeble his actual twenty minutes' lesson may be, that average teacher is no failure who, towards his scholars, even in these ways, succeeds in being their trusted friend.

Lift up your Heart.

So to the average teacher I want to say: 'Lift up your heart. Go on with your work. Improve it all you can. But believe that, such as it is, your work is good; the kingdom of goodness is the better for what you do; and what you do is not unrecognised.'

I remember reading recently in an American paper an editorial on 'The Patience of Sunday-school Teachers,' which elicited my sympathy. It seemed to me to apply especially to

the average teacher. Speaking of such a teacher the editor said: 'He is told how ignorant he is, how neglectful of his opportunities, how unsystematic and unscientific, and how meagre are the results of his efforts. He not only takes this all in good nature, but goes where he can hear more, hoping that thereby he may get some hints whereby he might improve. No one rates him any lower than he does himself. He is criticised by ministers who never themselves have made a success of teaching, by professional teachers who can be equalled only as one devotes his whole time to his art, and by theorists who never have taught at all, but who know better than any one else just how to teach! Buffeted from all sides the [average] teacher goes on with his work, conscientiously doing the best he can, and succeeds in doing more for the Kingdom than many of his critics.'

Now note the words in which this article concludes:—

'The world does not furnish a better illustration of Christian charity than the faithful Sunday-school teacher. He "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." And, though he goes weeping into the broad and often wintry fields of common life, bearing precious seed, he will doubtless come again with rejoicing, bearing his sheaves with him. Some day he will himself be transfigured with the glory of his harvest.'

J. J. WRIGHT.

'The Boys' Own Brigade.'



It is known by all who have much to do with Sunday-school work that the schools which exercise the best influence and help most in making the lives of their scholars useful, upright, and happy are those in which the teachers meet with the scholars on one or more evenings during the week, as well as on Sundays, endeavouring to lead the children to carry out practically in their daily lives the resolutions made in the Sunday classes.

The founders and supporters of the 'Boys' Brigade' are among those who encourage such work in Sunday-schools; and the success of this institution, in helping boys to become strong, manly, and upright, is now known in all parts of the world. The object of the Boys' Brigade is well expressed in the constitution as 'The advancement of Christ's kingdom among boys, and the promotion of all that tends towards true Christian manliness.'

A 'Company' of this Brigade was conducted for some years in connection with one of our London Missions, but in August of 1899 this Company was removed from the roll of the Brigade on account of its officers holding Unitarian views.

But these officers had seen so much of the good effects of the Boys' Brigade, however, that they determined to continue the work and to start a new organization. They believed that the

chief success of the Boys' Brigade was not that its influence brought new adherents to any special denominational church, but that it made boys healthy in mind and body—honest and upright. They thought, therefore, that the Boys' Brigade Executive was making a decided mistake in restricting the membership of the institution to those only who held certain theological views, and they determined that the new organisation should be free to members of all denominations.

The 'Boys' Own Brigade' (the new society) was started in October of 1899, its object being 'To increase pure and upright living among boys, and to promote habits of help, obedience, discipline, self-respect, and all that tends towards true manliness.' Boys of twelve to seventeen years of age are admitted as members, provided that they belong to a Sunday-school or other society of the kind, and can obtain the written consent of their parents or guardians.

'But how is the "object" fulfilled?' it is asked. It is difficult to describe all the ways and means adopted, but if a description of the work of one of the 'companies' of the Brigade is given some idea of this may be obtained.

A new boy arrives and wishes to join the Company. He is questioned by the Captain as to his circumstances, age, etc., and, if eligible, he is admitted as a recruit. For six weeks he must go through recruit drill—that is, he is taught the rudiments of all the various

exercises used in the drill of the Company, and his officers keep a careful watch to see whether his original enthusiasm increases or diminishes, and at the end of this six weeks, if efficient, he is admitted to the full privileges of membership of the Company.

Generally, at this stage, there is a marked improvement in the bearing and behaviour of the lad. He has donned the accoutrements of the Brigade—regulation cap, belt, and haversack—and he notices his comrades far ahead of him in smartness, so he comes to parade neatly and tidily dressed, holding up his head, and *just a little conceited!* This is exactly what is wanted; develop this trait in the correct manner and the result is *self-respect*. He takes his place among his comrades, privately drilling each other or discussing 'Brigade business,' and at the sound of the 'Fall in' he doubles to his place in the ranks. There is no talking or joking now: all are standing 'at attention,' awaiting the word of command: the parade has now commenced. Marching drill, formations of many descriptions, and physical drill are gone through (with or without 'dummy' rifles, as the officers of the company wish).

Here we have *esprit de corps* in formation; here is obedience and discipline being learned. Does the boy like it? Rather! Hear him talk afterwards of the 'honour of the Company' and of the progress of the drill! A short address from the

Chaplain or other good friend, the roll called and subscriptions collected, then a short prayer and 'dismiss,' and the parade is finished.

The new member's chest is weak, or his arm the same thickness at biceps and wrist. 'Come here on Monday evening,' says his Captain, 'and join the gymnasium.' He comes, and we see him there with his dumb-bells, or waiting his turn for the parallel bar exercises; and his arm grows stronger, as does his heart, and his self-respect increases. On another week-night he appears at the Social Club or 'Boys' Room,' and here he finds his officers, not commanding, but sitting quietly, engaged at 'draughts,' or teaching the many moves and intricacies of 'chess' to one of the boy's fellow-members. Some boys in the corner, there, are issuing books from a library; but his heart goes out more to that set of young men in the other corner who are busily engaged in 'printing and publishing' the Company magazine, and he takes *this* as his hobby, and the night goes quickly by. He knows his officers a little better now, and they, in turn, have read a little more of his character, and can see now where he requires help and strengthening.

Now, Sunday-schools are 'namby-pamby' things at the best (he thinks), and he has not been to one for a long time. Should he go to that 'Brigade class' the Captain talked of? Yes, just for a lark! He goes, but finds no 'lark.' Every Sunday morning, however, finds him in his place among the

others, happily singing one of the many helpful hymns we all know so well, or sitting listening to his Captain in the morning class or to the Chaplain at a 'Church Parade' offering straight and friendly advice on the leading of a true and upright life. And, perhaps, the Chaplain ends his address with the Brigade motto, 'Quit you like men—be strong!' and our hero feels a thrill of enthusiasm, and inwardly says: 'At any rate, I'll have a good try!'

What a pity it is that he works late on Saturday nights and cannot attend that ambulance class, with its bandaging and stretcher drill! But one cannot have all the good things at once, and that will keep until next year.

Later on in the session, when the spring arrives, notice is given of a grand 'march out' with some other Brigade Company, perhaps—a band, and so on—and our hero (who is by this time marked as 'one of the best' by his officers) is bold enough to ask for and lucky enough to be granted a Saturday afternoon off from work; and now we see him marching along with his fellows in full accoutrements on his road to some museum, or park, or some other place of interest. And what more enjoyable than the arrival at the busy cross-roads when the policemen hold up their gloved hands—all traffic stops and 'The Company' passes! This day ends perhaps with a 'tea' at his lieutenant's house, and when he gets home at night and tells his mother all about the delightful

day, the good lady feels just a little jealous of that lieutenant who so wins the boy's heart with his kindly sympathy and brotherliness.

So the weeks fly past. But let us come and watch our hero on the 'Annual Inspection and Display' night, as he arrives fully equipped and ready to show his own and the other fellows' parents what the Company can do in the way of gymnastics, smartness at drill, and good behaviour. Did you hear his name called out just now? Yes, there he is on his way to the platform; and, arrived there, note that the kindly lady 'patron' of the Company fastens something on his breast.

He feels a lump in his throat, and cannot see the people very well as he goes to his seat amid the cheers of his companions and all his friends. And no wonder! for he has just been awarded that medal for the 'best private in the Company' for which he strove so hard!

And now the session is all but finished; but one thing remains, and that is the Summer Camp. The subscriptions are now all paid in, and the preparations are complete, and there he stands with the Company in the station, eagerly awaiting the arrival of the train. We will not follow him through all his doings at camp, but rather wait his return, when he will come, all enthusiasm, and tell us himself 'all about it'—the joy of being with his officers (now looked upon as friends and comrades) and all his

fellow-members for one long week's holiday, the walks and cricket matches during the day, the concerts and stories in the evenings, and that night when he and some fifty others of his chums stood 'on guard' till midnight, and that brotherly lieutenant told him so much about the stars!

'No more parades will be held now until September,' announces the Captain before the final dismissal. But what is this glistening in our hero's eyes? Do you mean to say—'Cheer up, old chap!' says his chum the lieutenant, 'I'll see you on Sundays in the meantime. We've had a ripping session, haven't we?' 'Rather!' says the 'best private'; and so join in the 'Non-Coms.' and all the others.

And here we shall bid good-bye to the Company, with wishes for the further success of our hero. There are many of his stamp; and now and then, when the officers feel 'down' and disappointed with the results of their labours, and all their successes seem trivial with the loss of one black sheep on whom they have made very little impression, they are cheered by those like our hero (bless them!), who look for nothing but success and a great future for the 'dear old Boys' Own Brigade.'

That the influence of the Brigade may spread and its work be taken up by many earnest Sunday-school 'Helpers' is the earnest desire of the writer and his co-workers.

JOHN C. BALLANTYNE.

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